











850  
ADDRESSES

TO THE

CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION,

ON THE

Questions in the Ordination Service.

BY THE LATE

RIGHT REV. SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, D.D.

SOMETIME LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD;  
AFTERWARDS LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

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TO  
THE PRIESTS AND DEACONS  
ORDAINED BY HIM  
DURING THE PAST FOURTEEN YEARS,  
THESE ADDRESSES  
ARE DEDICATED  
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND  
AND  
"CHIEF PASTOR" IN THE LORD,  
S. OXON.



## P R E F A C E.

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THE following Addresses have been delivered at successive Ordinations to the Candidates for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Oxford. I have been led to publish them partly by the urgent request of those to whom they were delivered, and to whom they will, I trust, recall some of the deepest feelings and most solemn moments of their lives; partly because friends in whose judgment I have great confidence have thought them likely, under the blessing of Almighty God, to be extensively useful. Their main object has been, whilst they explain the meaning of our Ordinal, to stir up the devout and religious affections of those who were about to seek the great and blessed, but, at the same time, perilous office of Ministers of Christ. May God the Holy Ghost, without whose aid all such attempts must be in vain, be graciously pleased to bring home to the hearts of those who may

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read them the mighty and transforming truths which, with whatever weakness and imperfection of execution, it has been my object in these pages to set forth. May God the Holy Ghost, who abideth ever with the Church of Christ, speak Himself through these lines, to hearts waiting for His blessing. May He accept mercifully, for Christ's sake, this attempt to impress on the minds and spirits of some young champions of His faith the living characteristics of that marvellous ministry which is conferred and received in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to Whom, Three Persons, One God, blessed for ever, be all praise and glory, now and for evermore.

CUDDESDON PALACE,  
*Christmas, 1859.*

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## The Inward Call.

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“DO YOU TRUST THAT YOU ARE INWARDLY MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST TO TAKE UPON YOU THIS OFFICE AND MINISTRATION, TO SERVE GOD FOR THE PROMOTING OF HIS GLORY, AND THE EDIFYING OF HIS PEOPLE?”

“*Answer.*—I TRUST SO.”

*Office for the Ordination of Deacons.*

“DO YOU THINK IN YOUR HEART, THAT YOU BE TRULY CALLED, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE ORDER OF THIS UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND, TO THE ORDER AND MINISTRY OF PRIESTHOOD?”

“*Answer.*—I THINK IT.”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS I.

### THE INWARD CALL.

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DEAR BRETHREN IN THE LORD,—During the last three days we have all had our attention turned to various parts of that great subject,—the ministry of Christ's Church. Within this chapel, at our Morning and Evening Services, in my addresses to you on portions of God's Word, as well as in the more formal examination by which we have been occupied, it has been my desire and endeavour to bring especially before you the spiritual character of your future office, with the necessary consequences of its perilous risks, and its exceeding blessedness. And this I have done in the firm conviction that, great as is the importance to yourselves and to the Church of your being well furnished with the pre-requisites of a liberal education, and some measure at least of theological knowledge, there is one condition of yet higher necessity, and that is the possession of a true living faith in Christ our Lord, both for your own salvation, and for all the work of His ministry to be committed to you. An ignorant Clergy is a reproach to any Church, and must injure its efficiency; but an ungodly Clergy threatens the removal of its candlestick, and the extinction of its life.

I would, therefore, before I proceed to a few de-

tailed suggestions, once more beg you to reflect awhile upon this momentous subject. The first question which it will be my duty to put, before God and His Church, to every one of you who apply either for priest's or deacon's orders, brings it practically before us. Of those who seek the office of a deacon, I must inquire, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost?"—of those who seek the priesthood, "Do you think that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—"to take upon you this office?" and you must answer as before your all-seeing Judge, "I trust so"—"I think it."

My brethren, this question is an awful one to put—an awful one to answer. Your reply must be spoken deliberately; with the full foreknowledge that it must be rendered; with every opportunity for self-examination; after solemn prayer; in the presence of the Church; before the jealous God who smote of old with sudden death him who stretched out his uncommissioned hand to stay but the material ark; before the heart-Searcher whose invisible stroke swept instantly away those who "lied not unto man, but unto God."

For yourselves and for others it is of the greatest moment that you answer not this question carelessly or wrongly: for others—for who can fix limits or ends to the disastrous issue to souls for which Christ died, and to the whole Church, of the commencement of a faithless, indolent, unfruitful ministry? for yourselves—for the error is by all human means one which cannot be repaired. Your words cannot be unsaid; your vows cannot be read backward. Your ministerial character is indelible; the only reparation of which the case

admits is that you hereafter rise up to the requirements of the office which, whilst unfit to bear it, you have so unhappily assumed. And though the might of God's grace has wrought such marvels as this would be, yet who may venture to speculate upon being the subject of such undeserved mercy? Who will stake knowingly on such a hazard his own or his brethren's salvation? And, after all, such cases are not the rule, but the exception. As the rule, the ministry continues in its leading character as it commences. There is, of course, a growth in every living ministry; a growth from the weak uncertainty of infancy to the confirmed strength of perfect manhood; a growth in knowledge, comprehension, power, skill, insight, faith, and love; but whilst there is growth on all sides in a living ministry, growth is not in the dead. The increase of corruption is there the only change. This is, indeed, the enemy's sad mockery of growth; the development, within each false ambassador of Christ, of the character of Antichrist; the full ripening and perfecting of selfishness, in one of its various forms of covetousness, or lust, or worldliness, or utter sloth and carelessness; the contracting and the hardening of the soul; the dulling of all conscience, till it sleeps, to awake only in the terrible form of the worm which dieth not.

This, I say, is the ordinary law and rule of an unfaithful ministry. Instead of the man being made better, as the tempter whispers to you he will be, he is made worse by his careless rushing into Holy Orders. With them come new temptations and new requirements; new risks, that is, on both sides; and he has grace for neither; and so he falls, and falls lower than

other men ; falls, as perhaps he never would have fallen as a layman—falls, certainly, into deeper gulfs of sin and woe than he could otherwise have reached. God's Word, with which he must have some familiarity, like daily handled fire, hardens utterly his soul ; God's message spoken, but not listened to, makes deaf his ear ; the visions of judgment and of peace, on which he has gazed unfeelingly, have turned his sense of sight to blindness. And even if he reach not this depth of woe, there are many lesser woes for him who has entered with thoughtlessness upon this great charge. All—even the most thoughtful and prepared—find, it may be, as they go on, that they knew not whither they should be led, when first they began thus to follow Christ : His net caught them, and they were taken ; His voice allured them, and they followed Him ; but they knew not at first how verily they should be made like Him, made to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His Baptism ; on to this He leads them step by step ; for this, day by day, His grace enables them ; and so upheld, they can endure all things. But who can paint the bitter anguish through which they must pass, who, without a full trust in Him, and well-nigh without His presence, are met by these temptations, and overtaken in this storm ? It is most commonly with a heart almost broken that such men pass to life : it is as by fire that they are saved. Surely, then, this is an awful answer for any of us to pronounce ; and one concerning which it becomes us to search with all diligence whether we can make it with anything of Christian confidence and truth. Let us, therefore, for a few minutes go on to the consideration



of this question,—When may we trust that we are inwardly called by the Holy Ghost to undertake this office?

Now it will help us to answer this question aright, if we first clear away some of the manifestly insufficient grounds on which men are led to make this choice. Clearly, then, it is not enough to choose it as men may choose lawfully any ordinary business or profession. It is not to be thought that a man is moved inwardly by the Holy Ghost to undertake it, when he enters upon it merely because it is an honourable profession, and has attached to it a certain rank, respectability, or endowment; or because his friends have designed him for it; still less, because he has a family living waiting for him; or has good prospects of preferment; or, least of all, because he is unfit for any other business or calling.

Of all these, though in different degrees, we may most assuredly assert, that they are not the reasons from which any man can safely gather that he is called by the secret voice of God's most Holy Spirit to be a watchman for his brethren's souls, and an ambassador of Christ. Many of them, indeed, may blamelessly come in as secondary motives. To have been educated for the work; destined to it by pious parents; led to it by the outward appointments of God's Providence; to desire rather to live moderately by the altar than more abundantly upon secular earnings,—all of these may properly come in to aid a choice, but they must not be its basis. Some desire, at least, to live nearer to Christ in employment and pursuit than worldly callings render possible; some personal sense of the deliverance brought

to the soul by His Gospel; some desire to speak His precious Name to others; some love for souls; some aptness for ministering to them; some of the desires and qualities of the Watchman, the Steward, the Shepherd, the Physician, the good Master-builder, must be certainly within us, and attest the working of the Spirit of the Lord, if we would assert safely that we act beneath His guidance. And these may, and in not a few instances, thank God, do, mount up to an earnest self-devoting love to the Lord our Redeemer; to a supreme desire and labour to live in all things for His glory; to a spirit burdened with a "woe is me," and struggling like a pent-up fire until it can witness unto others of the love of God our Father, of the power of Christ's cross, of the healing, ennobling presence of the Lord the Holy Ghost. In such instances as these it is comparatively easy to trace the presence of a call from God; but in the case of the numerous intermediate shades of character which lie between these and apathy or coldness, there may be much real perplexity in settling this important question, "Am I truly called of God to serve Him in this office?" For though an answer to this question may oftentimes be obtained by a careful sifting of our motives, yet such is the deceitfulness of the heart, that even after the belief, at least, that they have so tried themselves, some may be led without due cause either to presume or to despond. Whilst, therefore, it may be very useful to ask ourselves such questions as these,—to what do my thoughts most naturally turn in thinking over my future course? do they mainly settle upon its ease, or family enjoyment, or respectability, or, on the other hand, upon its



labours, its fellowship with Christ, its glorifying God, and its eternal crown? and though the answers to these questions may give us some insight into the state of our hearts, yet even here it will be especially needful for us to remember, that it is not of *feelings* one way or the other that the great question should be asked; it reaches far deeper into the centre of our being; and these lighter airs of feeling may be nimble as the gales of summer, or charged thick with clouds and sadness, when the central man is of a mind wholly other from their mutable and deceitful aspect.

Let this, then, be your question,—what am I? And how may you learn that, but by seeing what you are in act and under trial; what are your ordinary motives, what is your ordinary conduct? And examine this, not by settling what will be your conduct under imagined trials, but by seeing what it has been hitherto in actual trials. Are you living as a witness for Christ, or for Antichrist? Are you resisting sloth, the rule of pleasure and self-indulgence, or are you yielding to them? Are you now cursing your brethren, or not caring for them, or are you already blessing them? Is your Lord dear to you? have you groaned beneath the burden of your sinful being? and has He turned, or is He promising to turn, those groans to joy? Do you know anything of the sinfulness of sin, of the sharpness and hardness of maintaining a warfare with it? Is the Christian life a reality in you? Do you know indeed what it is to have a place in the kingdom of grace, and in the strength of that grace do you desire to gather in the lost to Christ, their Lord and yours? In your present position, are

you seeking to live so as to glorify God? and is it your great aim in choosing this more especial service within the courts of His house, that you may glorify Him more abundantly? This is a point on which you should obtain what certainty you can. His glory should be your great aim. In whatever measure His grace has touched your heart, in that measure it will be your aim. And if, indeed, it be so with you, surely you may hope that He is leading you on to a higher room of service; that He is calling you, and that you may dare to answer; that He is sending you, and you may go; that you shall be as a sharp and winged shaft in His quiver; as one upon whom He will bestow in *that* day the faithful pastor's crown, bright with a glory more intense than that of ordinary Christians.

So much, then, as to the materials for an answer to the general question, whether you are indeed moved inwardly by God the Holy Ghost to undertake this ministry. But there is a further branch of this question distinctly stated in the service for Ordaining Priests, and implied in that for the Ordering of Deacons, to which I would wish for a few moments to call your attention. The question, put in its distinctness, is,—“Do you think in your heart, that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *the Order of this United Church of England and Ireland*, to the order and ministry of priesthood?” Now, a sincere answer to this question must imply that your mind is so fully and entirely satisfied as to the orders, discipline, and doctrine of that Church whose minister you seek to be, that you have not a doubt or a misgiving concerning her character and office

as being the true branch of Christ's holy Church which He has planted in this land. The first part of the question tests your secret call to the ministry of Christ; the second, your call to minister in this branch of the Church in which you apply for Holy Orders. If you have a doubt as to her true character; if you are conscious to yourself that you are about to sign her Articles in a sense of your own, and one which really differs from that in which they are proposed to you as the rule of your teaching, and the condition of receiving your credentials, you are most truly obtaining the office of a teacher under false pretences, and cannot expect God's blessing on your course. These may sound hard words, but they are unhappily necessary. So much labour has been spent, and so much perverted ingenuity employed, in mystifying the requirements of common honesty in this matter, that they who are charged to enforce subscription as a preliminary to conferring Orders, seem to me compelled to be even painfully explicit. I would not indeed strain the rule so as to require from all an absolutely passive uniformity of view on every separate proposition of the Articles, as the test of a conscientious subscription; such conduct would be very unlike the moderation and wisdom of the Church of England, which has always (witness her 17th Article) allowed a certain, nay, even a large licence to different minds; but I repeat my judgment, that unless you are honestly convinced that in the main tone and tenour of your mind and opinions you do thoroughly and heartily agree with the Thirty-nine Articles, as to what they assert and what they condemn, in the sense in which they are propounded

to you, you cannot honestly subscribe them ; and I will add, that I believe you could not more deeply injure yourselves than by allowing yourselves to sign such documents at such a time with subterfuges and reservations. I am sure that a more deadly blow could not be inflicted on our Church, than that a people, of whose character, thank God, sterling honesty is the distinctive feature, should have reason to suspect that their Clergy believed one thing whilst they taught another.

And now, brethren, if these points be clear, we may proceed to a few hints which I desire to give you, for the due fulfilment of this ministry, which you will undertake with a well-informed and settled conscience.

To enter, indeed, here at length on this wide subject, would be manifestly impossible. I hope, moreover, God willing, for an opportunity of addressing you to-morrow on some of its more solemn topics<sup>a</sup> : only I would now desire to suggest to you some considerations as to matters of detail, which suit the circumstances of to-day, rather than those of to-morrow.

And, 1st, let me repeat what I have already said to you here. Make up your minds deliberately, if you mean to be faithful, to lead a life wherein hearty and venturous faith will be daily tested by calls to unflinching self-denial. Your one work is to win souls to Christ : not to produce a certain general decency and amendment in the face of society around you, but as God's instrument, and through the power of Christ's name, to work in living souls the mighty marvel of their

<sup>a</sup> See a Sermon preached to the candidates for Ordination, at the Ordination of Christmas, 1845-6. By Samuel, Lord Bishop of Oxford. (J. H. & Jas. Parker.)

true conversion. How painful soever be the thoughts which it excites, never lose sight of this truth, that your ministry has failed as to every soul entrusted to you, who is not under it converted to the Lord, or built up in His holy faith. And such a work must be full of toil and self-denial. The "strong man armed" will not allow you to "spoil his house," and be free the while from molestation. And he is ever ready with his assaults and crafts; unless you slumber he will not even seem to sleep. Reckon then first on opposition.

And then, secondly, remember that in all this you have a real work to do. Let this thought be always with you. Go out to visit in your parish, not because you ought to spend so much time in visiting your people, but because they have souls, and you have committed to you (feeble as you are) the task of saving them, in Christ's strength, from everlasting burnings. When you talk with them, beware of the dreamy listlessness which would decently fill up some ten minutes with kindness, good words, an enquiry as to their families, their work, their health, ending possibly with a formal prayer; but say to yourself, Now must I get into this heart some truth from God. Be real with them; strike as one that would make a dint upon their shield of hardness, yea, and smite through it to their heart of hearts. When you preach, be real. Set your people before you in their numbers, their wants, their dangers, their capacities; choose a subject, not to shew yourself off, but to benefit them; and then speak straight to them, as you would beg your life, or counsel your son, or call your dearest friend from a burning house, in plain, strong, earnest words. And, that you



may be thus real, I would counsel you from the first to take as little of your sermons as possible from those of other men. Let them be your own, made up of truths learned on your knees, from your Bible, in self-examination, and amongst your people. And, to make your sermons such as this, spare no pains or trouble. Beware of giving to God and souls the parings of your time, and the ends of other employment. Beware of a pernicious facility. However poor or ignorant your people are, you may be assured that they will feel the difference between sermons which have been well digested and well arranged, and those which are put carelessly and ill together. Think your subject thoroughly over; settle, if possible, on Sunday evening next Sunday's subject. Meditate on it as you walk about your parish; pray for power to enforce it; and as you read God's Word, and go about your parish, light will break out on it, illustrations occur, applications suggest themselves; and when you write or speak, you will be full and orderly, and this is to be strong. Let every sermon be one subject, well divided and thoroughly worked out; and let all tend to this highest purpose, simply to exalt before your people Christ crucified. Deal much in the great truths which the blessed God has taught us of Himself; beware of always tarrying amongst the graves and corruption of our own fallen and tempted state, but rise up to God and Christ and the Holy Ghost, and bear your flock with you there. To lead them for themselves indeed through the Spirit, to believe in the Person of the Eternal Son, and so to stand before the Father, accepted in the Beloved,—this is life eternal.

But once more, let me say, begin your ministry at once. The spirit in which you begin it will probably cleave to you always; begin it, then, as you would wish to end it. From the first, fight against your great dangers—delay, unreality, mere professional decency, indolence, self-pleasing. Get you to the cross of Christ; look at those wounds; see in them what sin is; see in them what is the greatness of your Master's love; and, as a ransomed sinner, minister to ransomed sinners; take your censer and run in and stand between the dead and the living, for verily the plague is begun.

And to those of you, my brethren, who are to be ordained to college titles, and not to parochial cures, let me also say one word. With the same vows upon you, your duty, in some important points, differs widely from that of the parochial Clergy. Preachers of the word, indeed, when thereto licensed, you will be at once; and those who are engaged in tuition will find their flock amongst their pupils: as God's ministers, charged with the training of their fellow Christians, you must be far more than mere lecturers, or teachers of philosophy. Yet, still your duties and your temptations differ in many points from those of others. You have far more time, far fewer interruptions, than men who are labouring to supply the pressing spiritual necessities of populous parishes. And your duty seems to be defined by these facts: you should live much in devotion; you should be to your brethren, who are labouring amongst the multitudes, what Moses was, as he prayed upon the mountain, to Joshua, as he fought upon the plain. And, further, you should be deep students of theology. It is for you to maintain amongst

us a high tone of Christian learning ; and this is of moment, not only or chiefly that you may be ready to answer gainsayers, but because there is beneath all the separate facts and statements of theology a high and perfect scientific unity, the knowledge of which is most important for enabling minds which have mastered it to adjust the proportions and exhibit the relations of the different parts of truth.

And if these special duties belong to the academical Clergyman, no less marked are his peculiar temptations. First, there waits for him, in a high degree, the common temptation to a life of indolent and easy self-indulgence, whether in its grosser form of enjoying every day plenty of food and plenty of amusement, or in its subtler form of living for mere intellectual excitement. Beyond these, too, lie other dangers. They who have retired from the busy world to contemplation and a cell, have found ere now, too often, that the Satan whom they fled from in the crowd has travelled on before them to meet them in the waste. Self-confidence, fondness for speculation, love of singularity, separation from their brethren, and then the misty visions of the darkening eye, the eager throbbings of the narrowing heart, heresy, schism, unbelief, and apostasy,—these are the special dangers of the unwatchful Christian student. How, deeply, but as yesterday, some have thus fallen even by our side, is known to all of us. They are set as beacons to us, if such is our path, that we “be not high-minded, but fear;” lest like them we too be led hereafter deliberately to adopt errors which we have been permitted erewhile to expose with a clearness withheld from others ; and, at



last, to fly on the wings of an unbounded scepticism into the bosom of an unfathomed superstition.

And where, my brethren, in the world or in the study, where is our safeguard? Only in His keeping, who in the city, in the wilderness, and on the temple pinnacle, alike rebuked the enemy; only in His presence with our souls, who has borne our nature and redeemed our loss; only in the perpetual guiding of His everlasting Spirit; and He will not fail one of us, if we will indeed and constantly seek after Him. Only let us ever stay our souls on Him in the simplicity of childlike trust, and His promise is our own,—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”



# The Glory of God.

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“....TO SERVE GOD FOR THE PROMOTING OF HIS GLORY, AND THE  
EDIFYING OF HIS PEOPLE?”

*Office for the Ordination of Deacons.*



## ADDRESS II.

### THE GLORY OF GOD.

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MY BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—I desire to draw your attention a second time to the first question with which the Church meets you at the solemn hour of your ordination. It is her purpose to test publicly, by her enquiries and your answers to them, your fitness for the sacred office for which you are a candidate. That question, as you doubtless remember, is, “Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people?” Now so far as concerns the first and most direct purpose of this enquiry, the leading you, I mean, to consider what conditions ought to be fulfilled with regard to yourself to enable you to affirm with a clear conscience that you trust yourselves to be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office, I shall add nothing to what I have already spoken in detail. But there is a second and most important part of this question at which I have as yet but glanced in passing, and on which alone I wish this evening to fix your attention. It is that which is contained in these words,—“For the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people?” It is manifest, at first sight, that these words refer to that intention of your own minds

in all you do, as to which, both in your first undertaking the sacred ministry and in all your after-life in conducting it, you have need, before and beyond everything else, of such searching self-examination, and such continual watchfulness, labour, and prayer.

In examining this subject with you, I will beg you first to consider with me some of the reasons why this is of supreme importance. And this is so, first, because the want of a right intention makes all our labour vain. To a degree we can scarcely appreciate, it does this, in the long run, as to the effect of our ministry on others. Even from natural causes this must be so. Purity and sincerity of intention impart so much of their own blessed character to the whole conduct, that every act of the life becomes instinct with an energy and force which enables it to beat down opposition, and at the same time with a tenderness and patience which give to it a most winning persuasiveness in dealing with others. And there is no counterfeit of this great gift which, in the whole bearing of a life, can produce at all the same effects. The light enshrined in the centre of the character pervades it all, and streams forth from every part of it with an ever-present radiance; so that, viewing our great work even on its natural side, no other power can compensate for the want of this in our endeavours to bring living souls to submit themselves to the yoke of our Lord. But further, if from the contemplation of this merely natural side of our ministry we turn to that presence with us of God the Holy Ghost, which, indeed, gives us all our power, the same truth is even yet more manifestly enforced upon us. For though He may be pleased to work

His wonders even by evil hands; though Saul may be found amongst the prophets; though words dropped even from unholy lips may, through the power of the Holy Ghost, be brought home with such force to the soul of the hearer that they shall awaken it from the sleep of sin, yet this is not His common course. As a general rule, undoubtedly, though the validity and effect of sacraments administered, or of other functional acts performed, by unholy men bearing Christ's commission, is not affected or lessened by the unworthiness of the appointed agent, yet does such unworthiness most deeply impair their power of ministering God's Word for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints: first, because the power of God does not rest upon the hypocrite; and next, because in this part of our ministry God is pleased to make use of our own spiritual attainments for the edification of our brethren; and the prophet's eye is dimmed and his voice robbed of its clearness by the sins which cleave to him, and taint and darken his own soul.

But if the want of a right intention in our ministry tends thus directly to make it vain as regards others, with far more certainty and universality does it make it vain as regards ourselves. Such a ministry must be eminently provoking to God, Who searches the heart, and in Whose eyes every action takes its colour altogether from the motive from which it springs. How, then, must such a ministry appear in His sight? Remember its high dignity,—that it is to speak to men for God; that it is to bear to dying men, to men who at most have but a little span of life, which is evermore passing rapidly from them, in which they may be saved, the message

of salvation from the mouth of God; that it is to speak to such of the cross of Christ, of His precious blood shed for their redemption, of His agony and bloody sweat, of His passion and death, of these greatest and most awful realities. And what must it be to enter on such a work as this, with such a charge and such issues, as if it were a fit matter by which to make a little gain, or to display real or supposed abilities, or to indulge excited feelings, or, worse still, to win some passing applause and to gratify a miserable vanity! What deep inward degradation, my brethren, does it imply in God's messenger to barter the high aim of his Lord's honour and his brother's salvation for these sordid or paltry motives! How surely and altogether must such an one cast aside for ever the hope of those great rewards which are stored in the treasure-house of eternity for the faithful minister of Christ! Even if by his earnest exhortations sinners should be saved, what blessing will it be to him who has not taken himself the warning which he spake to others? even if he has succeeded in pointing the eyes of others to the Cross of Christ, what will it be but a deeper condemnation to him who has never fixed on it his own earnest gaze of love and trust? What will it profit him to have been the most abundant in labours, the foremost in risks, the most enduring in sufferings, to have borne rebuke and shame, and even shared the last agony of the martyr's fire, if all this was done, and ventured, and suffered for his own glory, and not offered meekly and reverently at the foot of Him who hath bought us at the price of His precious Blood? Surely as to such, these awful words of sternest irony are fearfully fulfilled,—“Verily I say unto you, they



have their reward<sup>a</sup>.” Think how bare such an one will be stripped in that awful day of strictest trial which is before each one of us. Think how such an outside ministry will shrivel up under the brightness of that eye of flame which will then be bent upon its meaningless, purposeless vanity. Think, before it be too late, what in that awful hour it will be to hear addressed to you in answer to the rising plea,—“Have I not in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” “I never knew thee, depart from Me, thou worker of iniquity.”

But this matter is of the deepest importance to us, next, because we are specially liable to this temptation; and that in many ways. For first, the very nature of our office exposes us to this grievous fall. Men who are engaged in the common affairs of this life are, comparatively speaking, little tempted to believe untruly that they are intending God’s glory in their common actions. The great mass of those around them manifestly and avowedly perform these same actions for some worldly object. They are seeking to become richer, or greater, or more renowned; to build up a family, or amass a fortune, or secure a proud name in the history of their land. Their ambition may be more or less noble or mean, but it is confessedly of the earth, earthly. It is not their temptation to suppose that they are in all this aiming at the glory of God, but to think that in the parts of their lives which are concerned with these things it is impossible to have such an aim; to suppose that their religious life is wholly separate from their daily life, and that this may be lawfully, be-

<sup>a</sup> Matt. vi. 16.

cause it must necessarily, be aimed at other direct objects than God's glory. But this is not so with us. And here lies the subtlety of our temptation. Our actions, aye, our professional actions, are all avowedly performed for the glory of God, and we therefore are in the greatest of danger of taking for granted that they are so intended by us, even when we have no such intention whatever. The act itself is so right, and the glory of God is so directly and immediately its true scope, that it needs a real effort of honest self-examination to discover, provided only that the act be rightly done, whether some base self-seeking motive has not utterly profaned it. And so more than other men we are in exceeding peril of becoming the helpless victims of self-delusion.

Take, for instance, the first seeking for Holy Orders, — a young man has been destined to it by his friends, perhaps by pious friends; he is naturally of a quiet disposition, has no strong passions to lead him astray, has no very robust qualities to fit him to struggle for a high place in the rougher walks of life; he is early destined for the ministry as a profession; he finds himself so destined, and he acquiesces; he grows up a thoroughly respectable young man, with no definite religious character, no strongly marked features of inward piety, no "fire in his bones" unless he bears Christ's witness, no "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel<sup>b</sup>:" but it is a mode of life which suits him; he wishes and hopes to be useful, to get his comforts round him, to take a gentleman's rank in society, and, in return for giving up the possible chance of wealth or worldly distinction, to have without much effort an

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 16.

ascertained place in good society, and perhaps, if matters turn out favourably, facilities for early family life and its quiet happiness. Now all this is in itself perfectly unobjectionable. But then observe, this young man is taught to say that he "trusts that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake this office, to the glory of God." Is this true? Has he ever thought, thought deeply, earnestly, with all his soul, as a man must think who is giving up his life to such an object, about "the glory of God" in the matter? Has he ever devoted himself, on his knees, with a true searching of heart, to the high service of his God? Has the "love of Christ" ever "constrained" him? Alas! in how many cases must we say, Never! Why then do not such men perceive the utter unreality of what they are saying? Very much, no doubt, because the act itself appears so good that they believe they may take for granted that it is done to the glory of God. It seems to them that these words are intended to describe the whole class of which they are members; they do not dream that to make them really true of themselves there is absolute need of a personal, individual devotion of themselves to God. Thus it comes to pass that they enter on their office under a delusion; a delusion which, in too many cases, is never dispelled on this side of the judgment-day. They preach, they baptize, they visit the sick, they catechize, they celebrate the Holy Communion, just as other men go to the counting-house, or the court of law, or the senate, meaning to live by it, to be respected, to be able to respect themselves; but taking for granted, without a shadow of reason for their judgment, because there is a religious aspect about

all the acts of their profession, that they are living for the glory of God, and are on their way to receive their sure reward.

But again, even if we escape the surface form of this temptation, we are for other reasons peculiarly exposed to its assaults.

Take the case of one who has entered the ministry on really good grounds and truly religious convictions. Let him be one who has learned at the foot of his Saviour's cross to love the Lord his Redeemer, who can say truly to Him from the bottom of his soul, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee<sup>c</sup>."—Is he safe from this temptation? If you would thoroughly appreciate its subtlety, follow him in thought to his pastoral work. He enters on his ministry really intending the honour of God and the saving of souls. He finds great interest in his work. His feelings are moved in it; and here rises his danger; for he begins secretly, unavowedly to himself, to substitute that gratification of his feelings for the glory of God as his real object. The feelings he gratifies have such a religious cast about them, that he is perfectly unconscious of his danger. The cunning enemy plies him on his weakest side, and with his strongest temptation; he craves for sympathy, for affection, and he feels that he obtains them, and these become his aim; and by degrees he preaches for them, he ministers for them, he speaks what will promote them, he is silent as to what would endanger them: they, and not the glory of God, are his object, and the life and reality of his ministry has perished.

<sup>c</sup> John xxi. 17.

Or take a worse case—he has popular talents, or a power of acquiring learning, a numerous congregation gathers round his pulpit, or the learned and the pious commend his ministerial labours, and he is tempted to preach so as to increase this pleasant following, and to minister so as to heighten these judicious commendations; he is less plain and simple, seeks less for its own sake to lift the cross of Christ before his people's eyes; he studies effect, and yet it may well be that he knows nothing of the change passing on him; he thinks that he wishes to win more souls to Christ; soft excuses are ever at hand to hide from him the sin of his growing unfaithfulness; the subtlety of the devil is too great for him, and he who pledged himself to seek God's glory and the salvation of souls, becomes a mere empty unmeaning hunter after a wretched earthly popularity; a mere receiver of honour one of another, instead of seeking indeed for that honour which cometh of God only.

Or perhaps the temptation is grosser still; he began at a poor curacy; he never thought about money; he did then desire to win souls; but a benefice came; and then a better one; and prospects opened upon him of yet higher things; and he begins secretly to be careless and negligent in his service, unless he has men of influence, or education, or fashion to whom he can minister; he needs other aids than the blessedness of attending to the poor to stimulate his highest diligence; and he who of old thirsted for the favour of his Lord is now contented to receive his pay in the base earthly coin of gain, and wealth, and station.

If, then, we are so peculiarly exposed to the subtlety of this temptation, it becomes us to be specially upon



our guard against its dangers; and as to the mode, therefore, of maintaining that guard, I will say a few words before I close.

And, first, we must see our danger; for it is mainly through blinding our eyes to it, under the cloak of those religious acts which belong to our profession, that Satan triumphs over us; and we shall therefore be in the way to defeat his assaults when we have once thoroughly opened our eyes to their reality.

And, secondly, we must resist it watchfully, and nothing will more aid us to do this than the habit of solemnly devoting each day and all its actions to the glory of God. We should never rise from our knees in the morning until in our secret prayers we have earnestly asked God to keep through the day our intention pure. If our miserable self-seeking, our vanity, our low aims are to be corrected or cast out, it must be under the direct teaching and aiding of God the Holy Ghost; and that teaching and aid will be given to us if we thus earnestly seek it. Thus shall we be beforehand with the enemy, and when he comes with his foul breath of temptation to whisper his poisonous suggestions in our ears, he will find us pre-occupied by the thought of God, to whose direct glory we have solemnly devoted all the day.

But then beyond this, through the day we must often, even in the midst of our busiest occupations, renew this offering of all we do or design to His glory. As much as possible we should pause before we begin any new occupation, and in a secret prayer shot up like an arrow to Him, pray Him to purify our intention in beginning it and to accept what we offer. And instead of intermitting this as to our more directly religious acts,

we should only the more diligently practise it ; knowing that these are the tempter's opportunities, and our most unguarded moments ; the points of the armour at which his darts can find easiest entrance. Thus before preaching, praying, celebrating the Holy Communion, visiting the sick, studying God's Word, or composing a sermon, we should lift up our hearts to Him with the secret aspiration, " Make me, Lord, in this, really to intend Thy glory, and keep me from the devil's frauds."

Further, we should, after our acts, frequently examine what has been our spirit in doing them ; we should search whether we began them to please God and went on to glorify ourselves. We should see whether we can trace the little but yet easily distinguishable evidences which mark the inward swelling or restless itching of vanity ; the liking, if not to talk with open and offensive vainglory directly about ourselves and our doings, yet still to hover so near ourselves that we can make secret short flights back to our own selves, and our excellence, and our successes ; or the saying what will lead others to speak well of us ; or the listening with greedy ears to commendations when they come.

Further, if in these or any of the like symptoms we can find the beginnings of this sore disease, we should seek the remedies ; of a deeper humiliation before God ; of a full confession of our littleness and meanness ; of earnest supplications to Him to keep us clear from self-seeking ; and of greater watchfulness against the company, or allowance, or train of thought which led us last time into the snare. Moreover, as there is about these temptations so peculiar an aptitude to our special weakness that even to wrestle with them is dangerous, since

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our deceitful hearts can suck a poisonous pleasure even out of the thoughts of self-exaltation which we face in order that we may overcome them, it is a part of spiritual wisdom to have other remedies ready for our hour of temptation. One special aid we may find here; in going straight, when the sweetness of a self-exalting thought rises in our mind under some success or some syren note of praise, to the recollection of some of our signal falls, and thinking how would these praises sound, even to those who utter them, if they had clear before them the full sight of all that inward evil of which we are conscious. Or, again, at such a time we may find help by turning straight in thought to our Lord's cross; fixing our thought steadily, if it be but for a moment, on His pierced hands, hearing His dying cry, and remembering that He bore that anguish for that sin which cleaves so close to us.

And but once more, my brethren, for the time warns me to have done; we shall find a great escape from these subtle temptations in striving to do all our acts sensibly and recollectedly, as in the sight of our Lord; to realize His presence; to remember that the gaze of His loving yet searching eye, which sees us through and through, is bent full upon us. No swellings of vanity can endure that recollection. In spite of all the delusions which our blind self-love practises upon us, we must in some degree perceive what is the utter worthlessness of that half ignorant, perhaps only half honest, praise of men as feeble as ourselves, which at other times so dangerously beguiles us when we look at the actions they are praising as being wrought under His eye.

Here, therefore, is our especial guard. We must live

more and more in secret intercourse and direct communion with Him; we must often retire, at least in thought and aspiration, from business, pleasure, nay, even from outward service itself, into the sacred shrine of His presence; in that presence the most subtle delusions of the tempter stand exposed to our gaze. We see the emptiness of all the rewards of this world and its prince, his enchantments fade away, the bewitching countenance of seeming beauty turns under the light of that eye into the hollowness and corruption of the grave; we see the worm in its loathsomeness where all looked but now enticing; and we hear the soft sounds of flattery turn into the malignant execrations of the pit.

He can save us, even from this close and most besetting danger; He will deliver from its snare each one of us who trusts in Him and watches for Him. In the sure confidence of His keeping you may make to-morrow your solemn Profession, and with the full and overwhelming sense of all your weakness, yet venture to declare that you do trust that you are moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake this office to save the souls of your brethren and to promote the glory of your God.

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# The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.

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“ARE YOU PERSUADED THAT THE HOLY SCRIPTURES CONTAIN SUFFICIENTLY ALL DOCTRINE REQUIRED OF NECESSITY FOR ETERNAL SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST? AND ARE YOU DETERMINED, OUT OF THE SAID SCRIPTURES TO INSTRUCT THE PEOPLE COMMITTED TO YOUR CHARGE, AND TO TEACH NOTHING, AS REQUIRED OF NECESSITY TO ETERNAL SALVATION, BUT THAT WHICH YOU SHALL BE PERSUADED MAY BE CONCLUDED AND PROVED BY THE SCRIPTURE?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS III.

### THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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MY BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—In my last Charge I entered at some length into the first question of our ordinal, and was led naturally on from considering the true call to the ministry to dwell upon its general character, and upon the first and essential qualifications which must be found in every faithful minister of Christ. I will, therefore, to-day suppose you to be familiar with these great foundation principles, and proceed to the questions which follow; and endeavour, with God's help, to consider practically how you may best fulfil the engagements under which your answer to them will bring you.

The two succeeding questions in the order for the Ordination of Deacons address themselves to two matters of the utmost moment; first, your “unfeigned belief in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament;” and next, your determination “diligently to read them to the people in the church where you are appointed to serve.” These questions, then, have direct respect to the rule and character which is to mark your instructions of your people, so far as the office of a teacher is committed to you. But this may be seen even more plainly by turning to the parallel questions put to those who are candidates for the priesthood.

In the higher degree to which they are to be admitted, they will have eminently entrusted to them the power and the duty of Christian teaching; and so the tone of the question put to them is far more distinct, and its object more searching. To them the question is,—“Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? and are you determined, out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?” Now the purport of this question is perfectly plain. It demands an explicit pledge from the future teacher that the whole of his teaching shall be drawn from the one sufficient revelation of God’s Will which is contained in Holy Scripture; it condemns equally the Papist and the Neologian; it admits of no developing power, either in the whole Church or in the individual intellect, to discover anything beyond what the first afflatus of the divine Spirit communicated to the minds and transmitted by the pens of the inspired writers of the Holy Scriptures. Thus, moreover, it points us to the proper mode of explaining Holy Scripture when any dispute arises concerning its meaning. Scripture must first, as our own martyr Philpot<sup>a</sup> replied

<sup>a</sup> “*Bp. of Gloucester.* I pray you, by whom will you be judged in matters of controversy which happen daily?

“*Philpot.* By the Word of God. For Christ saith in St. John, the Word that He spake shall be judge in the latter day.

“*Gloucester.* What if you take the Word one way and I another way? who shall be judge then?

“*Philpot.* The Primitive Church.



to his persecutors, be received according to the teaching of the primitive Church; and if the dispute be still continued concerning that, then Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture, particular texts by the analogy of faith. It is unlawful either for individuals or for the Church "to expound one place of Scripture so that it be repugnant to another;" so that hereby the paramount authority of Holy Scripture, as the rule of our belief, is absolutely asserted; to it must be the last and highest appeal of the individual conscience.

But it may be objected, if this is so, what is to prevent each individual interpreting Scripture as perversely as he will, and so destroying all certainty of objective belief? The answer to this is not difficult. Every one who makes this last appeal against that which is to him the teaching of the Church, does so under awful risks. He sets his own judgment against that which is to him, *prima facie*, the authorized interpreter of Holy Writ. For "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith<sup>b</sup>;" and if he does so from wilfulness or the love of his own private opinion, he runs great risk of being cast away on some of the many quicksands of unbelief. And this risk increases with the weight of the authority against which he appeals; until, if he appeal on his own

"*Gloucester*. I know you mean the doctors that wrote thereof.

"*Philpot*. I mean verily so.

"*Gloucester*. What if you take the doctors in one sense and I in another? who shall judge then?

"*Philpot*. Then let that be taken which is most agreeable to God's Word."

*J. Philpot's fourth Examination, Parker Society's edition, p. 29.*

<sup>b</sup> Article XX.

private judgment against interpretations of the Scripture which have been assented to by the whole Church from the beginning, such as are the Catholic Creeds, how can it be that he shall escape the condemnation of refusing to hear the Church, and being to the faithful as a heathen man or a publican? But still, under these awful risks the appeal for every soul is to God's written Word as the Supreme authority, and the whole Church cannot, beside it, enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.

This, then, is that to which you will be bound; this is to be the rule of your whole teaching, whether in catechizing children, in visiting the sick, in your personal instruction of the ignorant, in your training of the catechumen, or in preaching in the congregation.

Next, then, let us apply this principle practically by seeing what is the character of that teaching which fulfils this condition; and as preaching is the culminating point of this part of your ministerial function, I will, for shortness, endeavour to examine what it is indeed to preach that revelation of God's Will which is given to us in Holy Scripture; what it is, in a word, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, since the errors of which we are in danger mainly spring from a neglect of that due analogy of the faith which marks its revelation to us in Holy Scripture, through our dwelling exclusively or unduly on some of the many sides of truth to the neglect of others; and since this difficulty mainly besets us in applying to the altered circumstances of an hereditary Church a rule which admitted of no uncertainty, when it was laid down for those who had been gathered by

personal conversion from the heathen; we shall, I think, most easily attain to true conclusions by putting out of sight for a time our own peculiar case, and examining what must have been the true idea of preaching the Gospel to those who had not before heard of it, and who for themselves were either to receive or reject it.

The first ruling principle, then, of such a preacher's course must evidently have been this,—that what he had to declare was most properly a THEOLOGY. His business was to teach men who lay in the uncovenanted darkness of a fallen nature concerning God and their relation to Him; he had to begin, as St. Paul began at Athens, by declaring to them God their Maker and Preserver; he must shew them at once, and as the central point of His character, the Love of God to all that He has made; and he must shew them that this Love is, by its own necessary law, a principle of condemnation to every creature which has broken in on the harmony of all derived being by choosing that which is against its own perfect nature, because it is against the nature of God. This would lead him to shew, by the light thrown upon it from God's revelation of Himself, what sin indeed is. He would thus speak to the conscience of those who heard him; and that inner voice which, in tones dull indeed and inarticulate, yet still with a power as deep as his nature, does secretly shake the heart of every fallen man, would answer to him, and in the secret of the hearer's spirit re-echo his words. Thus the THEOLOGY, the coming forth of an utterance concerning God, even in its first beginning, would be at the same time most truly a history of man also; and when the preacher had

awakened and defined in the hearer's heart the natural sense of distance from God and enmity against Him, with all its hopeless blackness for the future, he would proceed to declare to them God's abounding love even to such enemies; he would shew what that love must accomplish before the rebel could be saved; that it was not a mere arbitrary mercy which could forgive without punishing or save without winning; that the race which sinned must bear its punishment, and that its punishment must even consume it. And thus he would be led to speak of the marvellous Love of the Almighty in the gift of redemption, of the everlasting Son of God becoming incarnate, of his standing amongst men as Man, as the true Man; of his bearing the sinner's punishment, and dying his death. But he would not rest in that; he would shew them that He who died rose again; that He rose as Man; that as Man He was the Head of a new kingdom, a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and grace; that in it there was full acceptance with the righteous God for each man who would for himself claim a living oneness with the Lord its head; for that such a man would stand no longer in himself, but in His head, the one righteous Man. Further, he would shew them that this was a kingdom of grace; he would open to them the mystery of the co-eternal and co-equal Spirit; of that ever-blessed and divine Person, one in unity of essence with the Father and the Son; a Person, not a power; a Person present for Christ's sake amongst the sons of men, who would dwell in each and knit together all; who would perform for each a separate work; who would begin by drawing them towards the Father and

the Son ; who would cherish their awakening affections, heal their distempered wills, and work in them a growing, a daily, an increasing work of miraculous transformation, until the clods of the earth should glow as the stars of the firmament, until the children of wrath should turn into the sons of God. He would then open to them the great mystery of Christ's Body the Church, as the tabernacle for the indwelling of God the Holy Ghost ; shew them the Spirit working through sacraments, Christ blessing through signs, the Father saving through instruments ; so that still it would be eminently a THEOLOGY, a word about God, which the preacher would be setting forth : it would be by the LOVE of God he would hope to win souls to their salvation.

Now this, I say, would be, in the simplicity of its idea, the preaching the Gospel of Christ to those who hitherto were strangers to it.

And from this it is not difficult for us to see what preaching the Gospel must be with us. For this only is really changed ; that instead of addressing an adult with a new message, in the hope that the preventing influence of the Holy Spirit may incline the hearts of those who hear to receive for themselves the message of salvation, we address those who, by God's special appointment, already are the certain subjects of this preventing grace. But in all other respects the work to be done by us and by the first preachers of the Gospel is still the same. We have equally, by God's power, to win over the will and affections of each separate reasonable soul to the love and service of God. We equally, with them, have, under the power



and trusting to the help of God the Holy Ghost, to draw the soul of each separate man from the rule of self-will and from the love of the world and of the flesh, to the love and service of his Maker, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier. We, therefore, must preach as they preached, most properly and truly a THEOLOGY, a word concerning God, concerning His love, concerning the burning holiness of that perfect love. We must shew them love separating the sinner from his sin, if he will be parted from it; and if he will not be parted from it, separating him from the company of the blessed, whom his permitted presence, whilst sin ruled his being, would turn into a company of the accursed. We must shew them love as kindling the flames of hell, even by the very act whereby it builds up the lightsome walls of heaven.

Further, this THEOLOGY will be with us, too, a history of man; we shall shew those to whom we speak what sin is in man. We shall explain to men the enigma of their own nature by casting on it the light of God's countenance. And thus, in declaring to them the everlasting Father, and the co-equal Son, and the co-eternal Spirit, we shall declare to them, also, themselves, and all the mysteries of that kingdom of God's grace in which they are.

For we shall make them understand how man, though bearing still in every natural faculty and power the marks of God's hand, has yet every faculty and power corrupted by the presence of sin every where within him. We shall shew them that they need no less a work than to be re-made by the working of the same God to whom they owe their first creation; and thus

every doctrine of the Gospel, and every precept of the whole economy of grace, will find its own place in our scheme. We shall preach fearlessly regeneration as God's act, as that which depends on His will, as His gift through Christ, which He is ready, in the faithful use of His own prescribed means, to give to all whom He has chosen to be grafted into His Church ; to themselves and to their children ; yea, to all without exception who do not, by actual unrepentance and unbelief, bar His gracious working. This first gift, we shall shew them, includes their acceptance for Christ's sake, their being freed from the condemnation of their birth-sin, and made, in virtue of their new union with the second Adam, the certain subjects of gracious influences. This, we shall explain to them, is to those who by nature were born in sin, most truly a new birth ; that it is their being brought out of the dark chambers of an utter helplessness into life and the opportunity of perpetual development and growth under the new conditions of salvation ; with provisions around them, and with a power working within them which will, if their operations are not marred and defeated, conduct them to perfection and to glory ; in a word, that it is their first entrance into the kingdom of grace, with all its infinite blessings and its infinite risks. But, then, with this we shall preach fearlessly the need of a true conversion of the heart and will to God, being wrought by His power in every separate reasonable soul. We shall shew that this great truth of their separate responsibility is the necessary consequence of the doctrine of regeneration, when rightly understood, not an interference with it ; that because in their regeneration they



are brought singly under the direct personal influences of the Holy Ghost, they must either resist that Holy One to their destruction, or yield to Him to their salvation; we shall shew them the regenerate man who will not be converted as the most fearful spectacle of obstinate rebellion which, so far as we know, the whole creation can exhibit. Thus, too, we shall be able to give them a clear idea of what conversion is: that it is God's work in man's soul; the mysterious untraceable work of His sovereign Spirit, whereby, as by the breath of the wind upon the ocean, He does by unknown ways win to Himself and salvation those separate, true, personal wills of His reasonable creatures, which Almighty power might indeed crush, but could not, whilst they remained wills, violently and by mere external force make to be that which they are not. That this, indeed, is conversion, in its essence; not of necessity sudden, or even hasty; that it is indeed so gradual in some, as to be in its separate increments imperceptible; but yet that in all who partake truly of it, it is most real. That it is the Almighty Spirit so purifying him on whom it works, that the will of the man yields itself to God, and the affections rejoice in its absolute submission. That it is, indeed, THE great change from darkness to light, when, through God's grace working in him, the MAN believes, indeed, in Christ the Mediator, and chooses as his portion God, instead of this present world. This, we shall shew them, is indeed, in its first measure, that living faith in Him by which alone, separate from any of those works which are to spring out of it, the believer is justified, that is, is accounted just before God. And clearness of view as to rege-

neration, conversion, and justification, will enable us to be clear as to all the remaining stages of the spiritual life: we shall have a clear view of renewal, not merely as the restoration of saints who have fallen, but as the daily work of growing sanctification wrought by God the Holy Ghost in souls yet in a state of spiritual discipline, and, indeed, under His guidance, as the fulfilment of that promise, the richest perhaps of all our inheritance to the soul which groans under the conflict with inherent evil, "Behold, I make all things new." Thus all the parts of the Church system around us will be full of light. They will be seen to be the visible veil of the invisible Presence. The Sacraments, prayer, the communion of the saints, the orders of the holy ministry, all will speak of CHRIST, none of themselves; all will testify of the FATHER; all will be instruments for the working of the blessed Spirit; earth will be but the vestibule of heaven; the clouds of our firmament will be the floor of the courts of God's glory; already we shall feel and know that we are in the kingdom of Christ. Thus we shall understand our vocation of restoring the fallen, and of building up the saints. We shall see that our "one baptism" is not, as some have seemed to dream, the sign and assurance of one single act of amnesty, but our admission into a state wherein always full forgiveness is pledged to every penitent believer in Christ; that it is our admission into a state in which we possess not A, but THE, remission of sins; that inasmuch as it brings us to Christ, it secures for all who at any time look up indeed with the yearning of contrite desire to Him out of the grave and charnel-house into which sin has cast them down,

the fullest and most complete assurance of their pardon. We shall understand also that there are many measures of the gifts of grace ; and that we are to strive to win for ourselves, and to lead others to aspire after, the greatest and the highest. We shall see that as the Holy Ghost advances His work, men pass from the stage of preventing influences which brooded over their regeneration, to the ascertained working which wrought their conversion ; that this was carried out into their renewal, which itself passed, as God accomplished His work, into the higher stages of a confirmed love, where-upon waits the blessed gift of perseverance to the end, the white robe, and the palm in the hand, and the eye wiped from tears, the feeding of the Lamb, and the crown of life ; yea, and finally the “ Well done, good and faithful servant ; ” and then the drinking of the living fountains of water, and the seat upon the steps of the everlasting throne.

Here, then, brethren, let us for a moment pause and see the point we have gained. What I have thus far said is all summed up in the first proposition I laid before you ; the whole of your teaching is to be a THEOLOGY, an utterance to man about God. It is all to be the Apostles’ Creed ; the declaration of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

And now, to illustrate this further, let me in a very few words contrast it for you with some of the erroneous points of teaching common amongst us. First, then, it is the opposite of a philosophy. It deals with the person of God. This, it is true, does incidentally make it the truest philosophy, but only incidentally. That which is the object of philosophy is the accident of

Theology. It does not aim at answering speculative questions, doubts, and difficulties, though it does resolve them: it reveals the person of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, speaking at once to the highest reason; to that which apprehends by faith and not by the mere exercise of the logical faculty; to the will in its most secret recesses; and to all the affections in their highest sealed fountains.

Further, as this teaching is not a philosophy, so, it is not primarily a system of morality. Incidentally, indeed, it is the only real and efficient system of morality; but it is this only incidentally: moral teaching by itself, with no insight and sanctions from without, from the true fountain-head of all moral being, is, amongst a fallen race, little better than mental and spiritual anatomy; a purblind poring into the nauseous revelations of disease and death; a groping darkly into the mechanism from which life has fled. Christianity is the bringing the mighty word of the Son of Man to such an one, and saying in the strength of His Omnipotence to that dead corpse, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

And this contrast between a Theology and every substitute for it we must remember throughout all our ministry, if we would have it really effective; for from this will follow such practical results as these.

1st. Our whole teaching must exhibit God; God in Christ; God by the Holy Ghost. Never, perhaps, was this caution more needed than now. The religious teaching which, from its strength and power, has of late taken far the deepest hold on men amongst us who are the most alive to religious impressions, is eminently,

and, I believe, very dangerously subjective; it is thoroughly a moral anatomy. Now it is wholly impossible for teaching to enter too closely into every turning of the heart, every form of blinding deception. Such teaching is felt to be real, and this gives it its power: too close and too searching it cannot be, but it may be all this too exclusively. It may always abide in this morbid anatomy of man; it may begin and end with man, and only speak of God as a general power, generally; instead of beginning with God, and ending with God, and in thus declaring the Persons of the ever-blessed God-head throwing light upon man's inmost nature.

And then, next, to carry out this idea, 2ndly, our teaching must be the result of a real comprehension of God's revelation of HIMSELF. If we merely study the details of dogma, our teaching will be confused, contradictory, or one-sided; we shall not see how the parts of God's revelation fit into one another, and we shall drop some; we shall omit from our scheme regeneration, lest it should be put instead of conversion; or conversion, lest it should gainsay regeneration; or the remission of sins, lest it should make men trifle with sin; or perseverance, lest it should make men presume; or reprobation, lest it should make men despair; or free grace, lest it should make men immoral; or the need of watchfulness, severe self-discipline, and obedience, lest they should make men legal and self-righteous. Only by knowing God can we see the harmony of God's revelation. And this I would press on you the more earnestly for two reasons: 1st, because, as God works by means and rewards diligence, we may hence gather that a ministry for which men



have not prepared diligently, by deep painstaking study, meditation, and prayer, must be most dangerous to themselves and to others. How, indeed, can any venture upon undertaking this ministry with slight preparation? They do not dare to practise the weightier callings of the world without diligent and painstaking study and labour. The ignorant smatterer whose untaught hand and unfurnished mind sacrificed the patient's life, would be felt amongst instructed surgeons to be no other than a murderer; and as the soul is more precious than the body, he is only the slayer of his brother's better life who rushes into Christ's ministry knowing not the diseases which he is to tend, or the remedies by which he is to cure them. And yet I greatly fear that at most ordinations some such untrained men present themselves, who have prepared themselves at the best for an examination, instead of entering deeply into the mystery of the revelation of the Lord. I trust that by a higher standard becoming more common, and by the increase of theological training, both in our Universities, and in Theological Colleges, this evil may be diminished. For I am convinced, as I have said already, that without greatly increased study and preparation the ministry must continue to be exhibited amongst us in a dwarfed stature and with incomplete proportions.

For this reason, then, first, would I press on you the necessity of knowing God, if you would safely undertake to be His messenger to others; and then, secondly, for this further reason, that here you may see not only what is to be the preparation for your ministry, but further, what is to be its continual course.

For that which is essential to your first entrance into this ministry must still animate your soul at every after-stage of its course throughout your whole life; you must know God if you would reveal Him. And this may teach you what your daily life must be, if you would be His faithful witness.

You must live near to God, if you would know Him so as to be able to declare Him, and you can only thus live near to Him by loving Him; and love, which opens the blind eyes so that they see Him, is His gift; it is love which places you in "the cleft of the rock" as He passes by: "He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, for God is love." Yes, ever remember it, love is His gift, His gift to those who wait on Him. Without it everything else is vain; and it can from its own treasures supply everything beside which you may need.

For the love of God will make you indeed know Him for yourself; and it will make you love your brother, and so know him too, for love is ready-eyed and most sharp-sighted. The loving soul will see what his brother needs, and be able to supply it; for love is quick and true in applying remedies, and has that master power which must dwell in every healer, that it draws the sufferer to itself, instead of driving him away. There is a tenderness in love which makes its touch so light that even the most deeply wounded will bear its handling: there is a reality about it which makes it go straight to the true point. And this will make all our ministry, and especially our sermons, effective. Instead of the dry, wandering, unreal generalities, the fine writing, or the unmeaning repetition of phrases which make so many sermons so absolutely intolerable, they



will be felt by those who hear them to be indeed living voices, voices about God, voices about themselves; as good news from the far land; as the message the weary soul wants. They will have abundantly that strength and blessing which the living words of men otherwise, perhaps, somewhat unfurnished, but whose souls have been full of love to Christ, have been ever found to have, piercing through the crust of carelessness and sin, and reaching home, as the very power of God, to the drowsy or the stricken conscience.

I press this the more because no one can listen carefully to the majority of sermons preached in our churches; few, alas, can closely scrutinize their own, without deep sorrow, shame, and dejection of heart. We could not, indeed, hope to make all the members of so numerous a body as the English clergy orators. But then, it is not oratory that we want. We want the plain, earnest, real, practical addresses of men who, having found Christ for themselves, long, like St. Andrew of old, to lead their brother to Him. We want men to speak closely and really of sin and of salvation, of heaven and hell, of corruption and of Christ. And how little do the ordinary run of sermons fulfil these requirements! How many sermons seem to be composed with no better idea than that they must occupy a certain time prescribed by custom, and that they must be filled with the religious phrases current in this or that school of theological opinion! Hence we find in them prefaces of inordinate length, porches larger than the buildings to which they lead; truisms repeated with a calm perseverance of dull repetition which is almost marvellous; vague generalities about the fall and about redemption, as if these awful mysteries were empty

words, and not living, burning verities. We hear, perhaps, one sermon wandering languidly over the whole scheme of theology, containing in itself a prophecy of its perpetual repetition, with an altered text, and sentences interchanged in collocation, through all succeeding Sundays; we find the faintest and most general description of sinners, such as can reach no one in particular; mere outlines of men in the abstract, not portraits of individual men, amongst which each hearer shall find himself; empty general exhortations not to sin, not revelations of sin in itself, or sin in its deceitful working; cold, heartless, unreal words about Christ the Healer, not the earnest, plain-spoken zeal of one to whom, because he believes, "Christ is precious." And, my brethren, can we wonder if, under such preaching, men slumber on unawakened; if conversions are few, if edification is scanty, if sinners abound, if saints are rare, if, though the prophet prophesy, all be still as it was of old; if there be no noise, nor shaking, nor coming together of the bones, bone to his bone? To such a dead, condemning ministry I earnestly pray God, even our Father, for His dear Son's sake, that none of you may at this time be sent forth. May He open your mouths, may He give you utterance, may He make you to "speak boldly as ye ought to speak," the mysteries of Christ's eternal Gospel.

Such messengers, once more let me remind you, you cannot be, whatever other fitness may be yours, unless your own hearts are indeed the subjects of His grace; unless in them be shed abroad the love of God, which shall surely breed within them the love of your neighbour also. For this only can make your ministry as it should be,—searching, close, nay, even startling; and

yet at the same time felt to be indeed the voice of the most real, loving sympathy with every grieved spirit. This will indeed enable you to lift up the cross of Christ; this will make you feel the importance, in every sermon you preach, of having some one fixed and definite purpose, some great Gospel truth you mean to inculcate, some gracious promise you desire to unfold; some sin you mean to expose, some definite declaration of Christ and His redemption, some special need in the flock committed to you; and such sermons cannot be unmeaning.

Much, very much, there remains for me to say, if I would fill up, even ever so rudely, this mere sketch and outline of your work. But the time warns me now to close. Only, beloved brethren in the Lord, let me once more remind you of the true greatness of the interests for the sake of which we would win you to such a life of labour and of toil. It is for your brethren's salvation; it is for your own salvation; it is for Christ's glory. Time is passing from us; God only knows how few opportunities may be left to *us*. Already have many whom I have sent to the work been called from it to their great account; already do several rest from their labours, or are taken from their sloth. And whose call, my brethren, may be next? Who would not, first, do in God's strength some work of God? who would not have gathered some seals to his ministry? who would not, when his Lord cometh, be found so doing? May God, for Christ's sake, grant it to us this day.



# The Ministration of Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline.

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“WILL YOU THEN GIVE YOUR FAITHFUL DILIGENCE ALWAYS SO TO MINISTER THE DOCTRINE AND SACRAMENTS, AND THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRIST, AS THE LORD HATH COMMANDED, AND AS THIS CHURCH AND REALM HATH RECEIVED THE SAME, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD; SO THAT YOU MAY TEACH THE PEOPLE COMMITTED TO YOUR CURE AND CHARGE WITH ALL DILIGENCE TO KEEP AND OBSERVE THE SAME?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS IV.

### THE MINISTRATION OF DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS, AND DISCIPLINE.

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**M**Y BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—In the Charges to those about to be ordained, with which, according to my custom, I have been wont to close our daily assemblings in this place, I have already considered the two first questions appointed in the ordinal of the English Church to be addressed by the Bishop to those about to be admitted to the priesthood. In the first of these I have endeavoured to answer that anxious question, How may I know if I am indeed called to this office by the Holy Spirit of God? In the second, I have further weighed with you the words which pledge you to undertake this office and ministry only “to the glory of God.” In the third address I considered your pledge to take God’s revealed Word as the one basis of all your ministerial teaching, and I endeavoured to set before you some distinct practical rules for your due employment of that general rule of your faith and teaching which God of His great goodness has given to us. I would now call your attention to the succeeding enquiry, and endeavour to ascertain in some degree what is the line of duty to which your assent to that will pledge your conscience.

Now the question is this, “Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and



Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same, according to the Commandments of God; so that you may teach the people committed to your cure and charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same?"

Now here are three distinct heads of duty; three separate charges committed to you; a threefold deposit entrusted to your faithful ministry: 1, Doctrine; 2, Sacraments; and 3, Discipline. Let us look at each of these separately, to ascertain, as far as may be, (*a*), our duty with regard to them; (*b*), the difficulties which oppose their fulfilment; and (*c*), the best mode by which these may be overcome.

And first, what does your pledge as to doctrine require from you? First, plainly, that your whole ministry should maintain doctrinal truth. With us, in great measure, God has lodged the guardianship of the momentous deposit of His revelation. "The priest's lips must keep knowledge." We have indeed, thank God, a fixed rule of faith in His Word; we have primitive creeds, and an orthodox liturgy; but all experience shews us that whilst these are, through God's grace, irresistible when wielded by a faithful, living ministry, they are not, without a faithful ministry, endued by God with such a self-moving energy as to keep His truth quick and living amongst the mass of men. Glosses explain away His Word; sophistry and subtilty refine upon it, and under the cloud which casuists raise, they can rend piecemeal the whole body of the truth, and having torn it up convey it secretly away. Liturgies are retrenched or disused; Creeds are forgotten, or emasculated, or re-

solved into a religious sentiment which soon evaporates, and is lost utterly. The living ministry must wield the sword of God's Word, must declare the doctrine which our liturgies incorporate, and guard the deposit which our creeds enshrine. For it is by these means that the high mysteries of our faith are to be brought home in their integrity to the consciences of men: and so entire faithfulness on the part of us, the maintainers and distributors of truth, is of the utmost importance. Very slight perversions on our parts become grievous distortions of the faith to others; we are the media through which the image is cast upon the impassive eye of the multitude. It takes in and exaggerates any break or confusion in the simple lines and colours which it is our duty to transmit to it unmixed and unimpaired. The preservation of the truth in the holy severity of its own fixed proportions, is one special part of our trust. And this trust is committed to all of us alike, collegiate or parochial clergy. Somewhat different, indeed, are the posts which with various weapons we are set to guard; but our object is the same. Those to whom God has given leisure, and books, and a sharpened intellect, and converse with the ancients, have an evident commission to maintain by proof and defence, by argument and answer, to ascertain and to define if need be, that body of dogma which makes up the Church's credenda. These same truths the parochial minister has to instil into the young and rude, by catechizing and homely instruction; and into all his flock by private exhortations as well as public preaching.

Nor is it simply the integrity of the faith in direct dogma, which it is our duty thus to maintain. The

completeness of the truth depends upon the preservation of the due proportion and analogy of its several parts. We may turn God's truth into a lie, not only by introducing falsehood into it, but by giving to its different members a prominence and importance which they do not properly possess.

Further, as we have this charge over Doctrine, so have we also over the Sacraments and Discipline of the Church.

For the Sacraments, we have, in act as well as in doctrine, to maintain their place and efficacy in the scheme of man's salvation, as well as to secure their administration in their purity. This will include our taking care that in their essence they are ministered as Christ has commanded, His Word not having been added to nor diminished; that they are not burthened by man's additions nor mutilated through man's incredulity; and further, that they are administered to those for whom He has designed them, and withheld from those from whom His Word withholds them; lastly, it will imply that we restrain the right of administering them to those whom our Lord has commissioned to this work.

This, too, experience shews to be a great charge. The Church of the fifth century had the sacred canon in its fulness, primitive liturgies, and many gifts of grace; yet carelessness as to this further deposit led to the development of all those fatal errors under the power of which the essential characteristics of the Sacraments were gradually overlaid by a multitude of human inventions, until, as our Articles say, their very "nature was overthrown." The reformed communions abroad

threw off these errors, but with them lost the guardianship of an apostolical ministry, and in three centuries they have often forgotten the essentials of the Sacraments of Christ, and too many of them formally rejected the very first articles of the Christian faith.

We have also to administer the Discipline of Christ ; and this again is no light charge. There is, indeed, as to this matter, a vast difference between our state and that of primitive times. How far this has been the result of past unfaithfulness in the Church, how far it is the necessary result of her wider extension, and especially of her public acknowledgment by nations, we need not now stop to enquire. We have to deal with facts, not with speculations ; to administer the discipline which is committed to us, not to crave or reach forth after what is not. And more, I think, does remain than a superficial eye would note. The power of excommunication is the legitimate instrument of ecclesiastical authority ; temporal loss and punishment are but earthly accidents which have grown up around, and often overshadowed the Church's discipline. The right to restrain and even to withhold the privileges of communion with the Church from those who profane them,—this is the power entrusted to her by her Lord, this is the power of the keys committed to her. Now whilst I do not deny that many anomalies, resulting from the altered and altering state of things around us as a national Church, press upon and harass us, still I believe that we are able, and therefore bound, to exercise a large share of that which is most truly the discipline of the Church.

For, first, the priest is now by law allowed, under the restraints of a reference to his bishop, with which the

Church has always limited the separate pastor's power, to withhold the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ from scandalous persons. And then, over and above this, there is a vast power of what I may call indirect discipline, which the faithful clergyman will find left to his direction. If he be felt to be indeed holy, consistent, and impartial, it will very rarely happen that he will have formally to refuse to the unworthy the administration of the Sacraments. In well-regulated parishes almost every man who, if discipline were stricter, would be cast out of communion by a formal sentence, is, through his secret deference to the judgment of the faithful, so far forth self-excommunicated. This state of things is indeed not recognised by the canon-law, which enforces on the clergy the necessity of burying any parishioner who has died without formal sentence of excommunication being passed upon him; and the variance is productive of harassing and painful cases<sup>a</sup>, from which doubtless it were well that we should be

\* One case which often much distresses the parish priest ought not, in my judgment, to perplex him as to the line of his duty: I mean, the being called on to bury one who has terminated his own life, but who is pronounced by a coroner's jury to have done so in temporary insanity. I say nothing here of the sinfulness of men on oath finding this verdict, if they do so in the teeth of plain evidence. But whether they do so or not is no question for the clergyman who is called on to bury the body. If the man was not in his right mind, he has not, according to the meaning of our rubric, "laid violent hands on himself," for the rubric must be understood to speak of a guilty, not of an innocent violence. The jury was the tribunal appointed by law to enquire into the circumstances of his death; and if they have declared him to have been insane, we have no more right to set up our private opinion of the fact against their verdict, than we should have to treat a man as a murderer whom a jury had acquitted.



set free by an alteration of the law, if such could be obtained without the introduction with it of evils greater than those we seek to remedy, for even here the evil is not perhaps really so wide as it appears, since, in many of these cases, repentance, (which in such cases the law of charity requires us, where it is not impossible, to hope for,) and the restoration during sickness of pastoral offices, may be considered as an implicit reconciliation of the sinner to the Church.

But allowing for all these anomalies, it is mainly left to us to maintain within our parishes that tone of Christian feeling which, almost as much as a more open discipline, forces the transgressor to perceive that from the full communion of the faithful and the covenanted grace of sacraments he is by his offence restrained. Here then are our trusts, and it is not without facing many difficulties that these great trusts can be rightfully administered. As to each one of them, there are hindrances from within and from without, which he who would be found faithful must not fear to encounter. Let us next look into these.

I. First, then, as to doctrine. Here, at the very threshold, we are met first by difficulties from within. Mere indolence is a great and perilous difficulty. He who would maintain the truth successfully must first have learned it perfectly. Now all truth is one; religious truth as much as scientific truth; and just as he who would speak accurately on the lesser and exterior parts of earthly science must first have mastered its leading laws: so must he who would, as a matter of conscience, speak truly on religious matters, have settled in his heart that great outline of the truth with which his



teaching on its several lesser points should be harmonious. But from this labour our natural indolence shrinks. It is much easier to pick up our religious opinions separately, and to hold them piecemeal, and so to save trouble at the cost of accuracy.

Again, in another way indolence withstands us. We continually come near to truths which we do not reach. We do not take the time, or the trouble, or the patient thought really to work out a conclusion, and so we get nothing more than that dangerous form of error, a half-truth; or still more, conscience forewarns us that the admission of such a truth would be troublesome to ourselves; that it would require the sacrifice of some cherished indulgence, the practice of some painful duty; that it would call for some distasteful humiliation, for some giving up of an inveterate self-righteousness; for a severer walk, or more earnest prayers, or more mortified covetousness, or a deeper self-abasement for sin; and so we dislike the truth: and more than half knowing what we do, we shut our eyes against it, through the indolent lethargy with which our natural corruption infects us.

But, further, indolence betrays us into perverseness: we are afraid of being convinced; we do not wish to undergo the labour of reviewing our opinions; we have long held them; we are committed to them; we have a great reluctance to give them up; we are therefore instinctively afraid of questioning them; and so, just in proportion to the small real reason we have for justifying our conclusions, is the obstinacy with which, wilfully shutting our eyes, we cling to them.

But indolence is far from being our only enemy within

We have all of us, from natural disposition, a bias towards some parts of the faith, and a disinclination to others; and from this tendency we are ever in danger of destroying the true analogy of its truths even when we do hold them. And this danger is above measure increased by any want of the watchfulness and care, which are essential to holy living. For sinful conduct naturally produces doctrinal error. There is the closest connection between these two forms of evil. Not more surely do certain bodily diseases affect the mind than do moral diseases pervert the faith. And then, still more, these perversions grow on evil livers as a retribution from God. He gives them up to their own deceits; yea, their own hearts make them to fall. His blessed Spirit is grieved, and leaves the man, and the lying spirit enters into him.

II. But, moreover, to these dangers from within we must add dangers from without. We are exposed to a constantly recurring temptation to lower down the truth that we may please those to whom we minister, or some whom we wish to win. The truth in its simple proportions is very rarely popular; the most needful truth is for the most part the most unpopular. Now without positively "prophesying a lie," we may easily give way to this pressing temptation,—for a pressing one it is. We have only to wrap up unpleasant truths in ambiguities of expression, or to dwell always on those truths to which there is no present objection; we have but to speak alone, or chiefly, that which does not oppose prevailing errors, or which our party will readily receive, to put the truth as effectually aside as if what we preached was no truth at all. And this temptation is all the

more dangerous because it often takes the form of our maintaining only great doctrines, or not entering upon controverted matters; whilst we are truly wandering as wide as possible from the apostle's practice, who kept back nothing that was profitable for his flock, because "he shunned not to declare unto them all the counsel of God<sup>b</sup>."

III. Again, in another way the temptations from within and from without run together to lead us to deprave the truth. I mean when from self-indulgence we allow ourselves in any sinful or unworthy conduct, and then are afraid of declaring truths because we secretly feel that in enforcing them we should, in the sight of others, be pronouncing and proclaiming our own condemnation.

Much the same difficulties withstand the due administration of the sacraments. For many plain reasons, all the difficulties which we have seen surrounding the maintenance of purity of Christian doctrine, gather themselves to a head around the doctrine of the sacraments. For concerning them is our main conflict of opinion, with the Church of Rome, with the various sects at home, and with the Protestant communions abroad.

Against the Church of Rome, which fiercely maintains the entangled web wherein are interwoven man's inventions, man's additions, and man's substitutions, with the simplicity and completeness of Christ's appointment, we have to make good our resolution of admitting no such human inventions, and enduring no

<sup>b</sup> Acts xx. 27.

such human subtractions. Against her we are bound to protest, when pretending to define what Christ has left unrevealed, she subverts the very notion of a sacrament by explaining of a carnal change and a substantial presence, the inscrutable mystery of the true taking and receiving of the Body of Christ by the faithful in the holy Eucharist. Against her we must, moreover, contend by exposing that vast and subtilly contrived system of external formalism into which she has, to so great a degree, resolved the mystery of the separate works of God's converting and renewing grace in every heart which He subdues and saves.

Against the various sects and Protestant communities, on the other hand, we have to maintain the reality of Christ's gifts in the sacraments, the certainty of His presence in them according to His covenanted promise, and so their high privilege of being the direct countersign and outward instrument of His spiritual working, whereby they are distinguished from other, though most holy offices, such as prayer, or reading God's Word, which, blessed as they are, yet are not sacraments, nor possess the special honour of sacraments, namely, to be the appointed and ordinarily indispensable channels, through which, when duly administered and rightly received, the Almighty binds Himself to convey the necessary graces of regeneration and renewal.

Now as the errors both of Rome and of Geneva represent certain mental and spiritual frames and dispositions, we shall, in maintaining God's simple truth against them, surely know in their full strength, both within ourselves and amongst our people, all the dif-

difficulties which, as we have seen, more or less beset the maintenance of all Christian doctrine. We shall have our own leanings; we shall be tempted to take up with half-truths and mutilated statements; we shall have to give up cherished prepossessions; we shall have to break through, it may be, some established formalism or some unspiritual theory which has encrusted itself on our own minds. No less certainly will difficulties from without meet us also. We shall differ from each extreme, on matters which are so strictly practical, that any difference will be sure to be keenly resented.

All this, too, will equally apply to the practical administration of the sacraments and of discipline. At any moment instances may occur in which we must stand firm, and yet where standing firm is sure to produce a sharp hostility.

And, now, how are we to resist?

I. First and before all, count on labour and opposition. The ministry is not an easy course; there is no promise that it shall be; faithful men have never found it such; lovers of ease should have nothing to do with it. You are to be yourselves not merely religious men, but theologians. This must cost you labour and toil. You are set to oppose error: you must expect resistance.

II. Weigh well the greatness of the object for which you strive. It is such as no reasonable man could hope to attain without exertion, and even suffering. It is the glory of your God and Saviour, (1,) by maintaining the Church's purity; (2,) by helping forward the deliverance of your brethren's souls; and (3,) by working out with fear and trembling your own salvation, and by winning from Him the special crown of



righteousness which shall belong in *that* day to them who turn many to righteousness.

III. Pray and seek for courage. Men in general think that there are but few calls for courage in the life of a clergyman; but there cannot be a greater mistake. At every turn of our lives we need courage of the highest and rarest quality; simple, calm, persevering; not that which glows only in the excitement of contest, though from contest, when necessary, such true courage will not shrink; but courage which must act in quietness, out of the sight and apart from the praise of men, for which are stored no laurel-wreaths of the earth; which must wait till the last day for its acknowledgment, and to eternity for its reward. Pray then, with all your prayers, for that gift of true courage which makes the "righteous" man as "bold as a lion."

IV. Be on your guard against private fancies: and for this end use all the helps which the providence of God has given you to keep you free from them. For instance, do not allow yourself to re-open as speculations, matters on which God's Word or the voice of the Church is clear.

I need say little as to the plain duty of acting on this rule when it is the Word of God which speaks. Its lightest sentence must be, of course, supreme; and you must be deep, constant, practical, praying students of it, if you would be sound and strong in doctrine and in discipline. It is as true now as it was in the Psalmist's days,—*"Thy word giveth light and understanding unto the simple."* But remember also, that the decisions of your Church must settle the question for you as her



minister. You hold your commission of a teacher on this condition. You must, as an honest man, lay down that office if you cannot fulfil that condition. She, for instance, has distinctly condemned all the peculiarities of Roman doctrine; you have subscribed to their condemnation as the condition of receiving a commission to be one of her appointed teachers; if you now approve of what you then condemned, you cannot honestly continue to execute an office which you hold on the presumption that you are always ready, without qualification or reserve, to renew that first subscription. Again, she distinctly asserts the regeneration of all infants by the act of God in Holy Baptism, even when that Sacrament is administered by unholy hands, and though no one save that ungodly minister, and perhaps an equally ungodly witness, be present<sup>d</sup>. You obtained, or are to obtain, your commission as a teacher, on condition of declaring your full assent and consent to this truth. If you do not believe it, you cannot, as an honest man, apply for or hold that commission. Guard your mind, then, from the incursion of private fancies by using faithfully all these assistances; and then, next,—

V. Seek to be strong in that great security for soundness of doctrine, a holy life. As an evil life breeds heresies by a spontaneous generation in the human soul, so does a vigorous life of holiness destroy those parasitical corruptions which attach themselves to bodies

<sup>d</sup> Compare Article XXVI., which distinctly asserts that the ungodliness of the minister does not bar the grace of the Sacrament, with the office for receiving the privately baptized into the Church, which says of every infant, though privately baptized by such a minister,—“Seeing now that this child is by baptism regenerate.”

of a weaker vitality. You cannot overvalue this security; and therefore is it that prayer, and communion with God, and earnest devotions, are so closely connected with a maintained purity of faith. In God's presence all is clear: as you wait on Him, the fertilizing dew of Heaven from above falls richly on you. It was the experience of the saints of old,—“I am wiser than the aged, because I keep Thy commandments<sup>e</sup>.” It is Christ's own promise to every one who sets himself indeed to walk along the narrow way,—“If any man will<sup>f</sup> do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God<sup>g</sup>.”

Such a life, moreover, will give you an instinctive love for administering the ordinances and discipline of the Church. For ourselves or others a tender conscience is the best of casuists, and a tender conscience is the blessing which God's grace bestows upon a holy life.

VI. Further, if you would discharge aright this great work, seek to hold the truth in love. Love alone can apprehend God's secret revelations; love alone can deal wisely, firmly, and yet without needless provocation, with your brethren. If you do love God truly, you will enter, as others cannot, into all the depths of His teaching. If you love your people truly, you will be as none others can be, firm, and clear, and unflinching in maintaining truth in doctrine and in discipline, and yet for Christ's sake will yield everything but truth to keep their love to you. This will save you from what is, alas! a very common danger. You will not mistake a quarrelsome temper for a courageous spirit; nor self-assertion

<sup>e</sup> Ps. cxix. 100.

<sup>f</sup> More properly, “willeth to do.”

<sup>g</sup> John vii. 17.

for the love of Christ's truth. You will be tender towards all men, not taking offence, nor giving offence, but affectionately desiring to impart truth to others, not to maintain your own position.

How many a ministry would such a temper have saved from failure and reproach ! Lacking it, and the humility which it breeds, a young man goes with ardent earnestness into a parish ; finds its tone as to doctrine low, and its manners as to discipline relaxed ; finds, it may be, its most religious men, through past insufficiency of teaching, little awake to the special truths of our holy Church ; and then, instead of seeking to win them to higher views by prayers for them, by a holy life amongst them, by building further attainments on their present religious knowledge, by gradually, in the loving and unsuspected influence of holy intercourse, raising the standard of truth in those who can endure its being raised, and then by acting through them on others—instead of this patient and humble course, he begins at once to assail the prejudices of all around him ; speaks as if he was the bearer to them of another gospel ; alienates them wholly from his ministry, and even from the truths which he is with so little humility, and therefore with so little wisdom, endeavouring to instil ; and leaves behind him, when he goes, an angry, alarmed, disordered parish, the troubled waters of which may not lose for years the muddy turbulence which his unhappy vehemence has stirred into such fierce commotion.

VII. Lastly, my brethren, be men of prayer ; be much alone with God ; commune with Him in secret ; open your heart often to Him ; wait upon Him ; draw nigh to Him through Christ the Intercessor ; lie low beneath the Cross of Christ ; seek to make sure for yourself of

that salvation; be not content with knowing of it, or witnessing about it; know it for yourself; seek to know what it is to have your sins washed away in His Blood, your hope firm in His righteousness, your condemnation nailed to His Cross; live much in the remembrance of the judgment-day; be contented with no half-knowledge of Him; with nothing but what will endure in that day; let Him teach you beneath His Cross your lesson. Seek there from Him, in virtue of His promise, a fuller gift of His indwelling Spirit, a more abundant Presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and all will be well with you and with your ministry for time and for eternity.

Brethren, unto His gracious keeping, with an anxious but with a trusting heart, do we commend you. You are going to a dangerous struggle, with a fearful issue: heaven and hell hang for you upon the balance. But be of good cheer, He is faithful Who hath promised; make Him indeed yours; lean your difficult ministry, lean your secret burden, lean your own soul, on Him Who died for you, and He will bring you through. What our Lord said of His of old is true of His always,—“These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world<sup>h</sup>.” They are His own gracious words, and all His words of precept are words of truest promise,—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life<sup>i</sup>.”

<sup>h</sup> John xvi. 33.

<sup>i</sup> Rev. ii. 10.



# The driving away of Erroneous and Strange Doctrines.

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“WILL YOU BE READY, WITH ALL FAITHFUL DILIGENCE, TO BANISH  
AND DRIVE AWAY ALL ERRONEOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES CON-  
TRARY TO GOD’S WORD; AND TO USE BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
MONITIONS AND EXHORTATIONS, AS WELL TO THE SICK AS TO THE  
WHOLE, WITHIN YOUR CURES, AS NEED SHALL REQUIRE, AND  
OCCASION SHALL BE GIVEN?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*





## ADDRESS V.

### THE DRIVING AWAY OF ERRONEOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES.

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**M**Y BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—The next question in the Ordination Service follows that which we have last considered by a most natural order. You have already pledged yourself to take God's revealed Word as the rule of all your teaching. Further, you have promised to minister faithfully and diligently "the doctrine and Sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded;" and in the very words of your promise, you have professed your belief that this Reformed Church and this Christian realm have received and do maintain His commandments; and you have therefore engaged to "teach the people committed to your cure with all diligence to keep and observe the same."

But besides this positive teaching to which you pledge yourself, you must, if you are a faithful minister of Christ Jesus, have your share in refuting error as well as in establishing truth. And so you are next asked whether you will "be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word, and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?"

To which you reply, "I will, the Lord being my helper."

Now the first point to be considered in the explanation of such a question is, manifestly, What are the errors which you pledge yourselves to combat? But to this, happily, there can amongst us be no doubt. The very words of the question itself forbid the possibility of doubt; you are to treat as "erroneous and strange doctrine," all teaching which is "contrary to God's Word." The appeal is "to the law and to the testimony." It is by the weights of the sanctuary that the gold is to be weighed. But simple as is this rule, the duty to which it binds you is one of no little difficulty. It is, in truth, a far harder task, and one requiring more temper and skill than even the direct teaching of the truth. For to oppose error successfully you must not only, first, thoroughly know the truth; but, further, you must understand the meaning and the history of the false teaching to which it is opposed; and yet more, you must thoroughly understand the nature and tempers, and temptations of the holders of error, or all your efforts against them will but stir up the angry and blinding dust of controversy, instead of leading any to see and turn from their delusions.

But difficult as is this task, a very little consideration will serve to shew us further how necessary it is. It is, indeed, one especial purpose for which the Church was founded. She is to keep the truth; to keep it from the additions and depravations, from the glosses and alloy, with which the corrupt heart of man will ever be attempting to defile its purity. Wherever the future of the Church is revealed to us in the pages of inspiration

it bears always this character, that it is maintaining a strife against false doctrine. So says our blessed Lord, "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many<sup>a</sup>." "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in-somuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before<sup>b</sup>." And St. Paul, looking on but a few years beyond his own time, warns the elders of the Church at Ephesus of the duty of watching and remembering his teaching, because "grievous wolves should enter in amongst them, not sparing the flock. Also that of themselves men should arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them<sup>c</sup>." And exactly similar is his charge to Timothy, whom he left at Ephesus that "he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine<sup>d</sup>," and whom he warned that so far from this strife ceasing speedily, the necessity of it would continually go on increasing, for that "evil men and seducers should wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived<sup>e</sup>." And so it will be evermore, until all "the elect shall have been gathered," and the blessed end be come. For the word of prophecy is plain: "There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction: and many shall follow their pernicious ways<sup>f</sup>." Yea, even to the very close the picture is still the same, save that the colours deepen and darken as that long delayed end draws nigh, even

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxiv. 11.<sup>b</sup> Ib. 24.<sup>c</sup> Acts xx. 29, 30.<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. i. 3.<sup>e</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 13.<sup>f</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

until they are all gathered into one point of blackness, in the coming and temporary triumph of the last personal Antichrist, of that "Wicked" One "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming<sup>g</sup>."

Here then, brethren, is plainly the vocation of the Church at all times,—to maintain the witness of Christ in this evil world. For this we have been gathered into one body; for this we have that without which, as far as we can see, a Church Catholic could not be,—the written Word of God; of which she is the "witness and the keeper;" in which is a fixed record of all truth; from the living light of which, according to her need, shall ever flash forth to the Church, while she looks for its guidance, new illumination of the present darkness in which at any moment she is encompassed; for interpreting which, as to all its leading and fundamental doctrines, she has the aid of early Liturgies, of Creeds, (every proposition of which is a record of some old battle-field on which the faith has been first assailed, but finally maintained, and ascertained, and cleared,) and again, a still lengthening consent of all ages and all parts of her universal body.

This, then, for which she has been so furnished by God, is the special vocation of the Church; whilst, within her communion, the same office is pre-eminently the charge of us, the clergy, of those whom God's lot has taken, in order that we may guard and care for the sacred things which He has given unto us and to our brethren. To all ranks of our body this duty specially belongs. It belongs to those of us for whom God's providence has marked out as our post an academic life.

For you, my brethren, are indeed set on the watchman's tower: to your eyes lie open the distant plains: you can see, if you will, what are the dangers which are threatened in the future by the early indications of the mind of the rising generation: you have leisure and endowments, and all the accumulated stores of the past for this very purpose, that you may, whenever need is, send forth champions armed duly for the conflict from your strongholds of calm observation, of ancient truth and of Christian learning. No less truly, though in another sphere, is this the charge of every country pastor. Into every flock the false teacher seeks an entrance. Through the active working of the spirit of falsehood every seductive form of error finds its way into remotest corners with a marvellous activity, as though the restless air wafted hither and thither its countless seeds, or as though some mysterious power called them from their secret sleeping-place beneath the earth. Even so the heresies which suit the temper of the age spring up in a night in places which we might have deemed wholly sheltered from their evil intrusion; whence it follows that every one of us who would duly keep his charge, must make up his mind to have not only to instil the truth into unwilling hearts, but also to drive away and scatter the untruths to which unguarded hearts yield so ready an opening.

What plain illustrations of all this do the present times afford us. How wide spread, and how on every side self-reproduced, are the delusive doctrines of which communism and pantheism are the foremost developments, but which have really their common root in that general tendency to a disbelief of all fixed external



dogmas, which it seems plain, from God's Word, is to be the ruling characteristic of the last times. Who can say that his flock, though apparently the most sheltered, is safe from these deceits? Who may not be called on instantly, and at a moment's summons, to draw forth from the ever-full armoury of God's truth the needful weapons to repel this band of ravagers from his peculiar charge?

But if it is, comparatively speaking, easy to see that this duty is ever incumbent on the Church, and that it is one of instant necessity for all those who are set to minister within it to their brethren's need, it is probably to none of us by any means so easy to see how we are to set about discharging our obligation. To this practical question, then, let us further address ourselves.

Here, then, let me say that if we would be true in this matter to our calling, we must first prepare OURSELVES by a diligent acquisition of the truth. We must possess an armoury stored with whatever weapons any sudden necessity may require. It will not do to be only a little way a-head of our people; to have to search for a clue when all things are entangled around us; to try to find out the way when a crowd of scattered hearts is gathered round us, looking, in their alarmed confusion, eagerly to us to point out to them the path of safety. We must not have to begin our study of the chart when the ship is already amongst the breakers. Our hearts must be beforehand thoroughly furnished. Hence the extreme importance of our being well instructed in all theology; of our having studied thoroughly the records of the former conflicts of truth and falsehood: for new heresies are, as a general rule, only the reproduction of old heresies. Hence, above all, the importance

of our knowing deeply and thoroughly that blessed Word of God in which is laid up for us all necessary learning. For a superficial knowledge of it will not serve our purpose. It is no new deceit of the enemy to clothe his lies in scriptural quotations. He tried our blessed Master with this very feint, and it is an often-recurring stratagem with him who well knows how to "transform himself into an angel of light." Almost every heresy which has infested the Church has claimed the support of some text or other of God's Word. Each successive teacher of error does more or less what Tertullian tells us<sup>h</sup> Valentinus did of old, who "spared the text of God's Word from mutilation or alteration, because, inventing a meaning of his own for Scripture, he had no need to invent a Scripture for his meaning." Now to meet this form of error it by no means suffices that we should know the Word of God well enough to alledge some contrary passage: for, after all, so to answer is but to urge text against text. Really to expose such error we must be thoroughly possessed with the spirit of Holy Scripture; we must be able to shew that the alledged text is misapplied because it contradicts the analogy of the whole deposit of the faith.

Here our blessed Lord's example stands full before us. When as the Son of Man He met the father of lies in open fight, against Him, too, was quoted the letter of God's Word: "It is written, He shall give His angels charge of Thee, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone<sup>i</sup>." His "It is written again, Thou shalt

<sup>h</sup> "Valentinus autem pepercit, quoniam non ad materiam Scripturas sed materiam ad Scripturas excogitavit."—*Tertull., de Præscript. Hæret.*, § 38.

<sup>i</sup> Matt. iv. 6.

not tempt the Lord thy God<sup>j</sup>," disposed of the whole fabric of falsehood by alledging a great principle lying at the foundation of the relations of man to God, which at once displayed the untruthfulness of the whole pretended authority from the Word of God. And if we would from Holy Writ prevent the abuse of Holy Writ, we must copy the example of our Lord, and our "It is written again" must be no mere rejoinder of text upon text, but base itself upon some real principle of God's Word, which will fix the charge of irrelevance on the misused quotation. And thus to use Holy Scripture we must indeed have sounded its depths, drunk into its spirit, and laid a firm hold upon its principles.

Very near analogous to this preparation of ourselves is the second point I would notice to you as needful for the fulfilment of our charge in thus dispersing error. It is that we build up beforehand our people in the full range of Christian truth and doctrine. This is a very great matter. They become the prey of heresies and errors, because they have not been previously thoroughly furnished with all truth. The man whose body is of a sickly habit receives readily the passing taint of any infection; the fortress which is built on unsound foundations sinks under the first battery of its assailants; and it is because the spiritual state of our people is low and the foundations of their faith ill-laid, that they imbibe so readily those errors presented to them, and that the fabric of their belief falls so easily before the enemy. It is all-important that we remember this, because ever and anon we shall be sorely tempted to rest without

<sup>j</sup> Matt. iv. 7.

taking the amount of trouble needful thus thoroughly to ground them in the truth. Our own indolence will be ready to bribe us with soft excuses. It will suggest to us that such a flock as ours cannot be made to comprehend these great truths in all their varied relations; that it is no little success if we can teach them anything; that plain practical instruction is the utmost they can bear, and that it is better to concentrate their attention and our own upon a few main points, than to endeavour to convert our busy, or careless, or half-instructed flocks into theologians. Some excuse will always be at hand when indolence is the counsellor, and our poor hearts are the listeners; yet, depend upon it, this labour must be taken if we would guard our charge from evil. For the most part it is too late when the evil is lodged to attempt to dislodge it. Our people ought to be so trained as to refuse to listen to the first whispered falsehood, and it is this training which the Church has provided for them. This is the meaning of that wise forethought which has appointed festivals for keeping ever in remembrance those leading events and acts of our blessed Master's life, out of which all the great truths of our Creed naturally unfold themselves. This is, again, the wisdom of providing for the common use of those various Canticles in which are stored the record even of the abstruser and more difficult articles of the faith: so that truths from which, in the naked severity of a dogmatic statement, the minds of unlearned men would shrink as harassing and perplexing, may make their way into their minds, and become familiar and established inmates, through the words of some well-known chant or accustomed hymn of praise. And

if we would have our people strong in the faith, our ministry must bear this stamp; following the Church's teaching, we must endeavour to build them up thoroughly in all truth, not wearying and perplexing them needlessly with the names, dates, and narratives of past heresies; but establishing them in all the contrary truths to what have been, and so, it must be feared may again be, prevalent errors. This work must be done in our sermons, in our visitation of our people, in our catechizing, and in our schools. Especially must we labour to work into the very texture of their souls those master truths,—the personality of the all-holy, all-mighty God;—the mystery of the ever-blessed Trinity;—the fall of man, and his corruption;—the misery and defilement wrought in him by sin;—the eternal counsels of the Father's love in the Gospel scheme of salvation;—the Incarnation of the ever-blessed Son our Lord, His perfect life, His spotless death, His all-sufficient atonement;—the gift of the Holy Ghost; the calling and grace of the Church;—the presence of Christ in the Sacraments;—the need of individual renewal unto holiness; judgment and salvation, heaven and hell;—of all of these we must labour to work a right knowledge into the souls of all committed to us, as the guards against and the antidotes for the various evils by which they will be assaulted.

But, moreover, besides this general preparation, we must, if we would fulfil in this respect our duty thoroughly, be on our guard to foresee and prevent the rise of special heresies or errors. The words of the question put to you are here exactly in point. It is not only asked whether you will drive away all erroneous



doctrines, but, beyond this, whether you will *be ready* to drive them away ; be, that is to say, on your guard ; be as men are when flaming arrows are falling thick around, ready to catch them up and cast them forth before the fire has lodged and spread itself, according to its nature, on every side. This is a very special part of the Church's duty. It belongs to her as a consequence of her prophetic character ; she is to be skilful in discovering the signs of the times, in seeing beforehand the indications of coming trouble. To illustrate what I mean, let me just mention what, by no dubious tokens, we may now gather to be a coming danger : I mean a general questioning of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Of what exceeding moment must it necessarily be, if such a question is before us, that we should be prepared for it ; that we should have thoroughly weighed the whole matter ; that we should know on what to rest our defence of this great truth ; and that we should, before the storm is upon us, have gathered the flocks committed to us out of the open country, where the hail might fall upon them, beneath the appointed covers and shelters of the revealed truth of God. Now our power of thus discerning beforehand what is coming upon us will ordinarily depend on our own spiritual state. For any allowed sin, or even any habit of spiritual sloth, blinds the eyes, so that they become unfit to read the tokens which God sets in the heavens to warn men of His dealings with them. Communion with God, on the contrary, opens them, makes them observant and discerning, quick as with heavenly light, and watchful as the guard of God. All this is one great blessing of living near to Him ; of prayer,



and watching, and obedience. And if we would possess it we must walk with God.

But, again, another point of great moment in the “driving away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word,” is that we should understand wherein lies their strength and attractiveness; for these will, in their essence, be ever found to be closely connected with some truth. The accidents of error are, indeed, often of themselves welcome to fallen men, as its lascivious rites have often recommended idolatry to an evil generation; yet no falsehood, simply as a falsehood, has ever, or as far as we can see ever can, exercise any wide or deep sway over the minds of men. It is as a perverted truth that it has its great power. And in this the subtlety of Satan may oftentimes be very specially seen; for he well knows how thus to wrap up in falsehood the truth which at the time the accidents or circumstances of an age or people require. In such a case pre-eminently, as indeed more or less in all cases, the only effectual hindrance to the spread of the false teaching is for the Church fearlessly to supply that very truth of which this current error is the perverted image. But this course requires a strong faith and a clear single-minded uprightness. It is far more easy, instead of fully stating the truth which is allied to the error, to put it for the time out of sight, as if at that moment it was dangerous to dwell on it; and then to bring forth as all important the truth which is the direct contrary of the error which has been mingled with the perverted truth, whilst we inveigh loudly against it, and dart our thunderbolts against its maintainers. But this, though the easier, is not really

the true, and will not be the successful, way of putting down the error. For it is, after all, the disguised, altered, disfigured truth which gives the lie its power: and if it be thus opposed, it can hardly fail but that one or other of these evil consequences will follow,—either in driving out the error we shall lose the truth around which it was encrusted, and then the Church will be hurried from one extreme of danger to the other,—too common an event in the history of doctrinal opinion; or, which happens still more frequently, we shall altogether fail in driving away the evil. For whilst we merely inveigh against the lie, even those who join us in condemning it feel that there is something in this false teaching besides that lie which they hate; and as we do not shew them what that is, they give the falsehood the benefit of this secret feeling, and so do not utterly condemn it; whilst those who have been seduced by it, having a true consciousness that there is something which our censures do not at all reach, set down all the condemnation as unjust, and through our unskilfulness hug more closely the deadly deceit. The history of all great heresies which have overspread the Church, and the history, on the smaller scale, of most successful parochial dissensions, are alike illustrations of this truth; the vibrations of heresy for the first four hundred years after Christ, which are summed up with so masterly a hand by Hooker<sup>k</sup>, exhibit the first danger; and for the second, almost any parish in which dissent has a powerful hold might be quoted as an example.

Every age, indeed, repeats the same lesson. Thus,

<sup>k</sup> Eccles. Pol., lib. v. cap. 52.

for example, what truths can we name of greater importance than such as these,—that no man can enter into life unless the Spirit of God has indeed changed and renewed his own individual spiritual being; that to know God as a reconciled Father, who, in Christ, has put away our sins, and enabled us to walk as dear children before Him, is the blessed privilege of His faithful people here; that as the correlative of having a conscience, we are each one charged with and must exercise the awful right of private judgment; and again, that in the Church of the redeemed are gifts of living grace free and common to all even without the direct aid of any earthly minister; and yet that in it, too, is a ministry of absolution and guidance and consolation, to be received faithfully at the hand of Christ's appointed officer by every penitent:—what more important truths, I say, can we name than these? Yet it has been from the careless handling of these necessary truths, giving occasion to the kindred false teaching which naturally encrusts itself upon each of them respectively, that the errors of the Antipædobaptist, the Methodist, the Latitudinarian, and the Romanist, have severally taken root in the Gospel field; and in no way can these be met successfully but by declaring fearlessly these very truths, which have been perverted, and shewing to our people that the truths themselves, and all the blessings which are to be obtained by believing them, can only be firmly held, and enjoyed in all their fulness, in the fellowship and teaching of the Church. It is not by withholding such truth, and inveighing against the erroneous exhibition of them, that we shall reclaim wanderers; the eagerness with which they are embraced shews the

acute sense which the thirsty spirits of men entertain of their necessity. It is only by freely, openly, joyfully proclaiming in its simplicity the truth which the false teacher mutilates that we can shake his dominion over our people's minds. There is hardly any rule of greater moment for delivering our people from error than this,—see what the truth is wherein lies the strength of the misleading teaching, and in the strength of that truth oppose the system which is strong by its abuse.

But there is one other rule, without which, my brethren, all will be in vain. We must resist error in a spirit of love. Here, after all, is the secret power of the wise reprover. There is nothing which love cannot say without offence, nay, with a most winning persuasiveness. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend<sup>1</sup>." Well was it answered by one holy man to whom it was remarked, "I cannot think why your people bear such plain speaking:" "It is because they know I love them." But it must be a true love of which this is the fruit. It is not the addressing them with epithets of endearment and words of tenderness which will secure it for us; it must be a deep inward love of souls learned beneath the Cross of Christ: it should manifest itself rather in the actions of a loving life than in ready and apparent demonstrations, and when it is real it will lead to the self-denying abandonment of ease, favourite pursuits, and of pleasant company, that in the morning, and at noon-day, and at eventide, whenever we can best reach them, we may be with the sick and with the whole, "weeping with them that weep, and rejoicing with them that rejoice;"

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxvii. 6.

teaching the young, and comforting the mourners, and recalling the wanderers, and building up the weak. Such love as this will impart to the loving pastor a character which all can understand, and which, in the long run, few can resist. The humility and sympathy which are true love's accustomed handmaids, give grace and ornament to all its words; diligence is its offspring; public and private monitions and exhortations, both to the sick and to the whole, are its certain fruits.

But, then, if you would drive away error in love, you must pray *for* the flock committed to you. It is really marvellous to what a degree the constant habit of praying for our people sets the pastor in his right position towards them; how by degrees it gradually subdues any harshness of feeling in him towards the evil living, even if they are obdurate in their sin; how it teaches him the difficult lesson of "speaking the truth in love;" how it enables him to copy the example of the one great Exemplar of perfect faithfulness and perfect tenderness.

Need I say, my brethren, that if this is the way in which error must be dispelled, it is no light or easy task to which we shall be bound? Indeed it is not; it is, for such as we are, most difficult, to be thus patient in preparation; thus quick-eyed as to the future; thus discerning as to mingled truth and falsehood; thus faithful and bold in dealing with our people; above all, thus diligent and humble, because thus heartily loving, towards them, and thus abounding in supplication for them. Yet this is our task; it is this you are about to undertake. Oh! enter not upon it with vain dreams of an easy, self-sparing life: see all its burdens, that you may seek



strength for bearing them, and that you may be able so to bear them as to win its crown.

For there is, my brethren, of God's exceeding mercy, a strength which may be yours, and a crown which you may win. There are gifts of God's grace which may be yours if you will seek them, which shall make you patient, wise, bold, diligent, loving, and full of prayer. Perhaps you look into your own hearts, and see at present so little trace of these graces that you are ready to despair, although your heart's desire is indeed to set yourself with all your might to this service for God and for your brethren. Yet be not cast down. He is "able to make all grace abound," not only towards you, but within you. Trust to Him that failing heart which you know you must utterly distrust. He will shew you your Saviour's Cross, His wounds, His love. He will make you by inner experience know the power of these things; and He who will work all that inward work will fit you with all other supplies, according to your need. He will open the stammering tongue with these words of might, "Have not I sent THEE?" Yes, my brethren, this must be our strength. The Christian ministry is His ordinance: and He will not forsake the work of His own hands, nor suffer His promise to fail. By our feebleness He works His purposes. Practise this truth, so full of encouragement to your weakness; use it so as to add might to your prayers; act upon it as a truth in your daily ministrations; act on it, not by putting forward great claims, however well founded, in your sermons and in your discourses, to the power vested in you by your undoubted succession from the apostles of the Lord, but by shewing forth silently, noiselessly, and without



pretension, the character which belongs to their successors. Be chief in feeding, chief in labouring, chief in praying, chief in suffering for the flock. And be not discouraged if they for whom you labour do not acknowledge your true mission. It is no new case. "Remember the word that" He "said unto" His apostles, "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also<sup>m</sup>." But for these and all other sufferings borne meekly and humbly for His sake, there is, be sure, for every faithful man an abundant recompence; for there is for every faithful one a crown of life. Surely this, too, is of His great love. Surely it were a gift large enough for such as we are, to be but employed in His service, to be allowed to wait in His courts, and to minister to our brethren; truly it were a rich reward for such poor service as ours is at the best, to have even the occasional refreshment with which He solaces our toil, with glimpses of a future rest. But no; He giveth more than this; "unprofitable servants" as we are "when we have done all," He gives a crown, even when we have done little. They are His own blessed words,—in the fulness of grateful hearts let us muse upon them; when we faint with weariness or despair, let us stay ourselves upon them,—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever<sup>n</sup>." It is not merely that in the great day we ourselves shall be saved; that His Blood shall have washed us clean; that the pit shall not swallow us up; but further, He who bought us with His precious

<sup>m</sup> John xv. 20.<sup>n</sup> Dan. xii. 3.

Blood has given us the desire of serving Him; He has made our desire effectual, and then He rewardeth that effect. He who worketh all in all, He who hath wrought all our work in us, Who hath redeemed us from hell, Who hath cleansed our impurity and strengthened our feebleness, Who hath given us every right purpose, and hath blessed the work of His Hands, He has added, over and above all, His own sure word of abundant promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life<sup>o</sup>."

<sup>o</sup> Rev. ii. 10.



# Private Monitions and Exhortations to the Sick and to the Whole.

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“WILL YOU BE READY, WITH ALL FAITHFUL DILIGENCE, TO BANISH AND DRIVE AWAY ALL ERRONEOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES CONTRARY TO GOD’S WORD; AND TO USE BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MONITIONS AND EXHORTATIONS, AS WELL TO THE SICK AS TO THE WHOLE, WITHIN YOUR CURES, AS NEED SHALL REQUIRE, AND OCCASION SHALL BE GIVEN?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS VI.

PRIVATE MONITIONS AND EXHORTATIONS, &c.

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MY BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—In my last Address I considered with you in some detail the former part of the question which it will be my duty to put to many of you to-morrow: “Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?”

To enable me to examine the question more thoroughly, I endeavoured to confine your thoughts to the one point of driving away erroneous and strange doctrines; seeking to shew you to what this engagement bound you, and how you were to fulfil your obligation. It is my desire to take up to-day the latter part of the question, and enter a little upon the momentous subject which it brings before us.

This is no other than the whole tenour of what, for distinction, may be called your more private pastoral labour. For though the question includes public monitions, yet we may for the present dismiss them as contained in that subject of preaching which a former enquiry led us to consider.



To what, then, does this promise bind you: and how are you here to discharge your obligations?

A more important question cannot be put to you. For whilst your ministrations in the sanctuary or in the pulpit may be the more evident and conspicuous features of your pastoral work, yet its real character will depend quite as much upon that great mass of private exhortations, and upon those labours with separate souls, which the eye of the mere by-stander might very probably overlook, but in which your flock will feel, even more keenly than in your public services, your weakness or your strength.

For in very truth, on these does depend, under God's blessing, the power and fulness of your ministry. They are all important, alike for your people and for yourselves. For your people they are of the greatest moment for many reasons. Let me point out to you a very few of them.

First, then, without close private intercourse, without bringing your mind patiently to bear upon your flock with all the labour and minute application of individual detail, you will never make them understand you. It is one of the great results of education, that it renders our minds ready at once to follow out any idea presented to them into its consequences and correlatives: one chord is sounded and many others vibrate to it, one note is struck, and the ready ear takes up the whole imagined strain. But where education has been, as it too often has been in our parishes, sadly scanty and barren, the mind is very slow to follow out what it has learned into any remoter consequences. Hence, even where the actual sense of a part of one of our sermons has been

comprehended by our hearers, it by no means follows that they have understood our true meaning, because it will often happen that to comprehend that meaning it is not enough to understand clearly one or more propositions, but that it is necessary to follow out into detail some thought or idea which, whilst it really pervaded the whole, was as a separate and direct proposition, merely or scarcely hinted at, and which by such a hint is not brought distinctly before the minds of half-educated listeners. Yet if they do not understand us, whence are they to learn the doctrines of our holy faith? That they must have many difficulties in receiving and holding these doctrines simply is but too certain. The history of all heresies makes it plain. For what are heresies but the errors which the mind of fallen man is naturally disposed to substitute for the truth of God reduced to form and system. Now the mere general impression towards good produced on uneducated minds by even an earnest and affectionate sermon, understood only in parts, is no safeguard against these errors. And so it is manifest that our people do often become the prey of schismatical and evil teachers, because, whilst we have perhaps kindled their feelings, we have not trained them to understand God's truth. It must be by conversation with them; by putting the truth before them with the briefness of statement, the reiteration, the plainness, and the meetness for their peculiar errors, which are only possible in conversation; it must be by catechizing child after child, and talking privately with adult after adult, that we can alone make them understand our statements.

Again, it is by intercourse of this kind that we must

gain and keep our hold on their affections. There must be a certain air of dogmatism and superiority about our pulpit addresses which requires to be softened and relieved by the kindness of private intercourse. If we would really have a hold on their affections, they must have seen us in their families, heard us by the sick-bed, felt individually that we do care for their bodies, and so learned to believe that we do really care for their souls, before they can give us that attention of love which opens the heart to our words.

And then, once more, it is of the greatest moment that we thus follow out our instruction into the minute details of their daily duties, needs, and temptations, that they may feel the practical reality of our exhortations.

The tendency to lead at once two lives, wholly distinct from each other, is almost universal. It will affect numbers of our flocks. They will be disposed to be religious up to a certain point in their feelings; to say their prayers, to come to church, perhaps occasionally to attend the Holy Communion, but they will be sorely tempted not to apply what they hear to the government of their daily lives, or to connect these occasional acts and feelings with their ordinary conduct. Nay, even beyond this, they will be tempted to substitute these religious feelings and this religious knowledge for prompt and hearty obedience in the detailed trials of daily life. Now nothing will, under God's blessing, more help us to lead them to make practical that which they thus feel than our carrying out the more general instruction of the pulpit into the closer and more distinctly applied lessons of personal ministerial converse.

But if this minuteness and detail of individual inter-

course is needful for our people, it is little less essential to ourselves. As it is necessary to enable them to understand us, so it is necessary to make us understand them. Without this we shall never know what they do and what they do not comprehend. Very many clergymen live always upon this point in a sort of amiable dream; they speak, or they think they speak, very plainly in their sermons; their flocks exhibit no manifest symptoms of impatience or fatigue under their teaching;—for the forbearance with which our people listen to that which conveys scarcely an idea to them is really wonderful,—and they conclude that all which they have said has been pretty well understood; when if they were to converse closely with the greater number of their hearers, they would often find that scarcely a word of one of their best reasoned sermons had really found its way into their minds. Now what can be the result of such a state of things save delusion on our part and undisputed darkness on theirs. This false impression of their state can only make us at our ease in leaving them uninstructed. But they will remain unblessed. The physician will not heal his patients by dreaming of their convalescence whilst he is profoundly ignorant of their malady. It is only by knowing the real forms of their disease, and applying actively his remedies to meet it, that he can hope to work their cure. And the diseases of the soul are not less subtle, and do not more certainly elude the touch of such a general unreal handling, than do the grosser and more palpable forms of disorder which affect the body. We never can hope to make our sermons thoroughly intelligible to our people unless we are in the habit of conversing with them, unless we sound them and try

them, and see how far we have reached their minds, and where we have failed. Such an examination would convey to some who have been used to contemplate their public efforts with not a little secret satisfaction many startling revelations as to the real effectiveness of their labours.

But we want this intercourse for another most important work also; we need it to enable us at all to reach the individual cases which come before us. It has been well said that he who having to fill vessels with long narrow necks full of water should, instead of taking them singly into his hand and pouring the liquid into them, satisfy himself by casting water promiscuously over them, would most surely lose his labour: and that not less certainly will he fail, who, having to deal with other men, contents himself with substituting for individual instruction the mere shedding over them the general shower of doctrine. But even this figure insufficiently expresses the truth; for the separate cases of distempered souls will require in manifold ways separate treatment: the proportions in which reproof, encouragement, restraint, and license must be administered will hardly be the same in any two cases. And the coarseness of an universal panacea will fail in the hand of the spiritual, as it does in the hands of the ordinary empiric; only with a consequent amount of evil as much greater and more irretrievable as the interests of the soul are vaster, more precious, and more enduring than those of the body.

We lose, moreover, when we neglect this constant private intercourse with our people, the great advantage of being able to turn to their spiritual profit the events



of their daily life. Just as the careful cultivator of the soil watches his times for more successful labour, and lets no change of atmosphere or sunshine pass by unimproved, but gains a more abundant produce from this day's heat and that day's showers, because a ready diligence turned both to an immediate purpose; so is it in our spiritual husbandry. A fit of sickness, or the restoration of health, or some other passing incident opens to us some door through which we never should have passed, and some heart which we never should have reached, had we not beforehand been watching for such a time to arrive, and so been prompt to use it when it came. All the turns of their lives become thus openings for good to the hand of a skilful and loving diligence, which watches over our people as having to give an account of them. The afflictions and the joys which wait on their family career, the sickness of a child, an unexpected recovery, an unlooked-for success,—these and many more such opportunities present to us living hearts in that state of softness which makes it possible for us to strike with effect for God and for themselves, and, through His grace, to stamp an impress which they never otherwise would have received, and which will now be deeply imprinted on them.

Nor is it only on account of the power it gives us of understanding and dealing with our people that this closeness of intercourse with them is thus important. It is most needful also for maintaining in our own minds the habits and temper which are essential for success in our work. Without it we cannot keep alive true reality of feeling towards them. God has so constituted us that we must touch others closely in their particular wants, and



trials, and sorrows, and joys, if we would really sympathize with them. We must stand in this personal relation to them, and enter into their individual difficulties, before we can feel for and with them. When, therefore, we suffer ourselves to be mere addressers of a congregation from the pulpit, instead of dealing with our people in detail, we are almost sure to become unreal. We grow to substitute that play upon our own feelings which we practise when we speak to numbers, for the reality of Christian sympathy. All the deep lessons which come from bearing other men's burdens are lost to us. The manifold instruction which pours into us as we patiently watch by sick-beds, and grapple closely with sick consciences, and bind up as with our own hands the soul's wounds, and pour into the stricken heart the balm of Christ's Gospel, all this store of instruction is withheld from us. We grow accustomed to throw our own spirit into the attitude of general compassion and sympathy, without really compassionating, or bearing really the smart of sympathy; and so we become soft, sickly, effeminate declaimers about feelings we do not know, and efforts we are too selfish to make. And this lack of reality of feeling grievously injures our own souls, and marvellously weakens our ministry. It is indeed a great and blessed discipline for the affections and instruction for the ignorance of our own souls, which God provides for us when He makes us His ministers of healing amongst our sick and wounded, and poor and distressed brethren; and if we shrink from this, when His providence has made it our special vocation, it cannot fail but that we shall suffer grievously for our omission. For this is closely connected with a sinful lack of self-denial, and a sinful yielding to self-

indulgence. The attention to individuals of which I speak, the readiness to suffer with them, the patient bearing with dulness, and apathy, and caprice; the gentleness of handling, the unnoticed struggles with heaviness or shyness; the sacrifice of gratifying freely a taste for literature, or exercise, or any other pursuits which would draw us aside from our chief purpose; the reverence for humanity, as that which Christ has redeemed, even in its weakest, or dullest, or most unprepossessing instances, because they are our charge, our charge committed to us by Christ, Who died for us—all this cannot be attained without many struggles with the habit of self-pleasing, and much growth in the difficult and trusty grace of self-denial. And without this our ministry must be weak, as with it, of God's goodness, it will assuredly be strong.

If such, then, be the great importance of this part of our ministerial work, let me give you a few practical hints as to its successful discharge.

And first, let me say, make up your minds for difficulties in this work. In truth, easy as the work of ministerial intercourse looks at a distance, there is no harder part of his duty to a pastor who sets himself with real earnestness to its discharge. Good Archbishop Leighton's dread lest when he visited he should make either a blank or a blot is the fear which must have continually presented itself to every mind practically acquainted with the subject. Be assured, then, that you will meet with these difficulties, that their unlooked for presence may not startle or alarm you. For so it has been with not a few, who say they have no gift for visiting their people profitably, because they find these

difficulties and shrink from them as being peculiar to themselves, instead of seeing that they are inherent in the work. Again, be assured of the existence of these difficulties, in order that facing them boldly, instead of slipping aside from them, you may know how to deal with them and overcome them. For they are of many kinds, arising from our own temptations and characters, and the characters and temptations of our flocks. As, for instance, we shall be too ready to substitute ordinary kindly intercourse with them for any true pastoral handling of our people; whilst our people will, in too many cases, welcome such a falling short of our duty. Many are very ready to substitute a friendly intercourse with their clergyman, especially if it takes a religious turn, for being truly and personally religious men. It is to them in the nature of a set-off for some evil, or careless, or spiritually negligent practices. Thus, if we are content that the exchange of a few religious phrases, or kind words, or courteous greetings, shall count as ministerial intercourse, they will be ready and forward so to let it be. But if we resolve to come closer to them, to grapple with them, to bring home conviction to their consciences, to find them out in their hiding places with a "Thou art the man," they will seek by every stratagem of natural artifice to avoid our really reaching them. And now, instead of the pleasantness of a general mutual friendliness, our intercourse with them will require for its due maintenance the exercise of all those great graces which combine at once faithfulness and tenderness, boldness and patience, truth and love. And here at every turn we shall be met by new difficulties, which can be resisted only in the

strength of God's grace. For if we will not be content to speak with a kindly interest of merely common matters to those we visit, they will seem, it may be, to yield to us, whilst they contrive to keep all our conversation to the more general topics of religion; or, it may be, they will perpetually wander to the character of others; or will directly apply to us to read some few verses, with exposition and prayer, as a seemly religious service, under cover of which they may escape. So many are the artifices of the uneasy but unawakened conscience; so firmly, whilst yet with all tenderness, must it be dealt with.

Nor are these difficulties found in the case of those only who are distinctly irreligious. So far from it, when the conscience is really stirred, even when it is almost ready to yield, the man will often redouble his efforts to escape full conviction. The first feeling of the hook makes his struggles the more desperate, and there is often in ourselves a strange readiness to help him to escape, and a nervous dread of what may follow; so that by a sort of unacknowledged compact the weak points of the character are suffered to pass by us unnoticed in mere generalities, and the great result of full awakening is lost.

All these are indeed difficulties; but they are difficulties we must surmount if we would discharge aright our duty. For that the Church does consider this as our duty, will, I think, be manifest at once to any one who will compare this question, as it is addressed to those who seek to be ordained Priests, with the declaration of the special duty of the Deacon in this matter. For his duty is limited to the "searching for the sick,

poor, and impotent people of the parish, that he may intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell unto the Curate ;” whereas the question we are now considering points clearly to the far higher function of acting as an awakener of dull, and guide of stricken, consciences. Here, then, we touch the difficult and anxious subject of the spiritual direction of others, involving the due use of private confession ; and as to these we must have some clear view if we would have our visitation of our people conducted on a fixed plan.

Now as to this important subject it is plain, 1st, that our Church never designed that the ministers of God’s Word and Sacraments should abdicate that which is amongst the most important functions of their office, the dealing as ministers of God with the consciences of men. Yet on the other hand it is equally clear that there is a broad distinction between her intention herein and that of the Church of Rome. Can, then, this difference be referred to any guiding principle of action ? It seems to me that it may, and that we may find the difference here. The object of the Roman Communion and of our own is widely different, and this difference at once affects our several practice. The object of the Roman Church is to bring the conscience under the power of the priest, to make him the judge to whose sentence it should absolutely defer. The object of our own Church is so to awaken, enlighten, and strengthen the conscience, that with the aid of Holy Scripture and the ordinary public ministrations of God’s word, it may rightly guide the individual soul.

With these different objects in view, there is between



the two systems far more than a mere difference in degree. Every part of the priest's private ministrations with consciences is affected by it. The one is always seeking to subdue, the other to emancipate, the individual conscience. And this difference of object has by degrees greatly affected the statement of doctrine as well as the administration of discipline in the two Communions.

Thus it is not merely that private confession is enjoined upon all in the Roman Communion, and only permitted in certain exceptional cases in ours, but that the spiritual aspect of the same act assumes a wholly different character in the two communions. The teaching of the Church of Rome is, that confession to a priest is a direct sacramental ordinance of the Church of Christ; and, that to be duly practised, it must be secret and complete, numbering all remembered sins. So made, it is to be followed by private absolution, which, as it is held, conveys a special pardon for the sins so remembered and confessed; and then, consistently with this system of confession, she recommends that every soul should be permanently under the direction of some priest; that this spiritual director should habitually guide those who consult him; that the conscience should be committed to his keeping: this is, in their view, the result to be aimed at; it is the best state of spiritual health when most regularly and systematically the conscience lays down all its burden in confession before the minister of God as a direct act of spiritual submission, and receives most humbly and obeys most implicitly his directions for all its conduct. It is not difficult to see what must be the effect of such a system. It will lead to many



great evils, and amongst them these. When confession to man is thus enforced, or even encouraged as a duty, instead of being allowed as a last permission, to which under certain peculiar circumstances, and as an extreme remedy, the stricken soul, unable to reassure itself, may have recourse, it will with many be used dishonestly. The habit of withholding the real and deepest sins of the soul, consistently with getting through confession, will soon be formed. On the other hand, those who strive to confess all will assuredly be led to weaken the spring of conscience by devolving that determination of what is right, which is its own solemn responsibility, to be discharged under the eye of God and by the light of His Word, to the decision of another for it. The confessor will take the place, first, of Christ, as the receiver of all the secrets of our guilt, and shame, and weakness, and then of the conscience as the judge, arbiter, and director of our lives.

Now in opposition to this system, the Church of England, in exact conformity, as we maintain, with the Word of God, and the teaching and the practice of the primitive Church, allows private confession instead of enforcing it, and recommends it only under certain prescribed circumstances and conditions, as a means of restoring health to a sick conscience, instead of treating the habit of confessing as the state of health. She treats it as wise men treat medical aids, as blessed means of renovation, stored by God's mercy for their need in times of sickness, but still as not meant for, and not wholly compatible with, a settled habit of strong health. And this difference of view is founded upon a great doctrinal difference as to the place which confession occupies in the new king-

dom of Christ. The Church of England does not treat it as a separate ordinance of Christ, endowed with a special sacramental grace of its own; but she regards it as a permitted "opening of grief," as a "lightening" of a "burden," as in no way bringing any special pardon or absolution to the penitent over and above that which he might equally obtain by general confession to Almighty God, and public absolution in the congregation, but only as a spiritual confidence which might be entrusted to any brother Christian, but which it is most natural and best to commit to the Physician of souls, as having more experience of such cases, and as being specially provided by God with grace for their treatment and relief.

This, then, is what we should bear in mind in this delicate part of our office. We must seek to awaken a slumbering conscience, to heal one which is wounded. If we see it possessed by apathy, we must use all our strength to rouse it; if we think that we perceive it to be burdened with some secret load, we must strive to win it to hearty confession to God. If it be earnestly desired, we must ourselves receive, as God's ministers, the spiritual confidence of the burdened soul; but we must do all this with the distinct aim of restoring the conscience to that healthier action in which it shall be able to guide the soul which God has, with the gift of individual personality, committed to its watchfulness and keeping.

At any time these and other difficulties may suddenly meet you in your private ministrations to the sick and whole. Surely such a work must test all your powers. In this arduous and momentous part of your duties you

will, I think, find some aid from a few strictly practical rules which I will further suggest to you.

Conduct your pastoral visits on a plan. Do not leave them to mere accident; map out your parish, and let every part of it come, within a certain time, in regular course under your eye. It will still further aid you in this if you will keep a regular list of your visits, and review them at fixed intervals; once a week, for instance, or once a month, as you find most convenient. Yet whilst you have a plan do not make yourself a slave to it. You may by this means distract and weaken efforts which gain a great part of their effect by concentration. Thus, for instance, it is far better thoroughly to follow out one case, and then take up another, than to be imperfectly handling two at once. Much, in such circumstances, is to be done by reiteration. Never, therefore, intermit your efforts in any instance till you have really tried to bring it to a full conclusion. If you fail to do so, leave it wholly for a while. Make your absence felt. This seems to be acting upon our Lord's rule of turning from the city which rejects your witness to another.

Again, prepare for your visits. Prepare for them, by frequently weighing the characters you have to deal with, and the objects you really propose to yourself, so that you may have the case before you in all its bearings; and then further prepare, by settling before each visit what point you will try to make good in that visit. Have a definite aim. Determine to do something each time: to bring home the sense of some sin, to lodge in the mind some one truth, to make some promise of good felt, to enlighten some dark place of the heart. Visit-

ing our people with such definite aims adds a marvellous power to our ministerial intercourse with them.

Again, before your visits prepare yourself for them by secret prayer. Bring the cases of those you are about to visit before God. Seek for light, seek for strength, seek for faithfulness, seek for love enough to deal with them. It is marvellous how often the most difficult cases will unravel all their intricacies when you thus spread them before the Lord in prayer. And then in all your visiting, set before yourself this great object, to bring your people indeed to Christ. Be content with nothing short of making them feel their sinfulness and utter loss without Him, and so of turning to Him with all their hearts. Evermore seek to raise Him before the eyes of men, to lift up His Cross, to bring them under His hands for healing. Never be content with getting them to welcome you, or to adopt your opinions, or to give a general assent to the Gospel scheme, or to mend merely their outward life, but aim at making them the true, loving, trusting, followers of Christ, at leading each one for himself, as a separate soul, to seek for pardon, reconciliation, life, peace, and joy from Him, and then in return to give up all to Him.

All this, no doubt, is laborious; but it will abundantly repay your labours; not only will such a ministry give you the hearts of those to whom you minister in a way nothing else can do, but it will re-act on all the other parts of your ministry. It will give life to your prayers, closeness and reality to your sermons, quickness to your sympathy, strength and definiteness to your warnings. It will, above all, if it is conducted thus laboriously from a simple love to Christ, with a single

eye to His glory, and in full reliance upon Him, be a ministry the Lord will bless. In unknown and even unexpected ways He will manifest His presence with you, and you will have that greatest joy which here can be bestowed upon the faithful pastor, you will see that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, you will find in your own experience that there is an abundant blessing in resting simply on that rule of holy service, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good<sup>a</sup>."

<sup>a</sup> Eccles. xi. 6.

# Private Ministration to the Sick and to the Whole.

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“WILL YOU USE BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MONITIONS AND EXHORTATIONS, AS WELL TO THE SICK AS TO THE WHOLE, WITHIN YOUR CURES, AS NEED SHALL REQUIRE, AND OCCASION SHALL BE GIVEN?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



THEORY OF THE EARTH AND ITS HISTORY  
 BY J. D. DILLON

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## ADDRESS VII.

### DILIGENCE IN PRIVATE MINISTRATION, &c.

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THE question on which I have now to address you is one which has already occupied us at some length. But its great extent and its extreme importance compel me once more to enter on it. It is this,—“Will you use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?”

Now the special point which I wish you to weigh in addition to what I have already said, is the life of diligence to which this engagement will pledge you. The evil against which our Church would thus guard you, palpable as it is to the least observant eye, is, alas! a very common one, and it ought therefore to engage our attention at such a time as this, when the true note is to be struck for many a future ministry.

Of diligence in your “public monitions” I have already spoken in detail when considering another question, and to that part of the subject, therefore, I shall not now return, but will consider with you the other half of your pledge, and see what you promised as to those “private monitions and exhortations,” on the right conduct of which the efficiency of your ministry must so largely depend. Now the first great point to which you here pledge yourself is honest labour:

you promise to use, so far as you can, private monitions and exhortations "as need shall require." And surely this must be in no scanty measure. For how manifold, how recurring, how constant is this need. How does it beset all classes of your parishioners. How greatly must the careless and unconverted need this private handling. Many of these never come to the public services of the Church, and in them, therefore, the word of exhortation cannot meet them: or if, from custom or decency, or to quiet conscience, they do come to church, with what deaf ears do they sit beneath our public addresses. Experience teaches us that it is scarcely possible to overrate the dulness of such souls to all our public ministrations. The habit of carelessness cases them in an almost impenetrable armour; and rarely is it, and of God's special mercy, when one of our arrows finds an entrance through its joints. And even when an impression is created, it is commonly soon effaced again, unless private care follows up the word of public exhortation, and fixes and deepens its work. Then, too, there are souls trembling on the edge of conversion, against whom the world and the devil bend all their power, and who need the tenderest and the most watchful care to land them safe on God's side. There are those who are just setting out along the narrow path, whom the pastor's hand must hold continually up. There are the naturally dull and sleepy, who need perpetually re-awakening. There are the timid, ever ready to turn back. There are those on whom this world has still a strong hold, and who are ever in danger of being drawn aside by its enticements. There are the mourners and sad-hearted, whom God has been fitting by troubles

to receive His message from our mouth ; who are looking about them for a comforter, and who, if they find one in us, as they would have found in Him whose commission we bear, may at this moment be won to Him and to salvation ; but who, if they turn not now, may never again be disposed to listen. There are souls in spiritual distress ; gentle, doubtful, perplexed spirits ; which cannot tell aloud their griefs, but which need urgently the listening ear and tender sympathy of him who for Christ's sake will, like Him, the true Pastor, "gather the lambs in His arms, and gently lead those that are with young<sup>a</sup>."

There are times of life, moreover, which require our special attention. The young men of the parish, in that dangerous and important season when they are first asserting their independence of control, need our utmost, wisest, and most loving vigilance : the old, whose time for active employment is past, and whose leisure allows of their being led on to form habits of more systematic devotion, are another class to whom we may profitably give much labour and care.

Then, too, there are a multitude of circumstances from time to time affecting our different parishioners which call for our most careful treatment. Such are family difficulties, family misunderstandings, losses of substance, the going forth of young people into the world, their changes of service, the birth of children, and the like, all of which afford opportunities for spiritual as well as pastoral counsel ; and many of which cause our people urgently to need such advice as only the trusted and loving pastor can give to them.

<sup>a</sup> Isa. xl. 11.

Now the mere recapitulation I have just made of the various characters and of some of the circumstances which require our care, may shew us what need there is of diligence if we would discharge this work at all.

But this we shall see yet more if we look somewhat more closely into the subject, and instead of resting contented with the mere perfunctory discharge of these duties, strive to estimate what is needful for discharging them aright, and in all their fulness.

For since, as I deem most happily, in the English Church the parishioners are not brought by any mere formal rules before the pastor at stated intervals for confession and absolution, but all the deeper spiritual handling of their souls and consciences must be the result of their freely seeking him as their adviser and of the opening spontaneously their griefs to him, he must obtain their confidence before he can hope to exercise aright those inner functions of his office which are conversant with the hearts and consciences of men. And how much is needed before he can hope to be thus trusted. There must be not only, as the foundation of all, a daily consistency of life, a manifested spirituality of mind, gravity, sincerity, uncorruptness and habitual soundness of speech; but there must be that intimacy which alone nurtures the slowly-growing plant of confidence. There must be a trust in our sympathy, and patience, and kindness, or else the heart will not open to us; and this trust can only be gained by degrees, whilst it may be shaken in a moment. One irritable expression, one angry or unsympathizing answer, one inconsistent action, may kill past revival the first tender shoots of trust. It is not, therefore, without great

and continual diligence that it can be obtained. No man who is always in a hurry with his parishioners can obtain it; no man who wants to make them religious out of hand, as he would go through a task that may be done with, that he may have his time to himself, will ever attain it.

Thus our intercourse with our people is exposed to two almost opposite dangers, both of which are in a high degree fatal to our success. We may go and visit the sick and the whole; read with them verses or a chapter of the Bible; enforce it upon them by exhortation; read prayers with them; and take our departure thinking we have done all, and counting up at night, perhaps with some satisfaction, our labours and our visits, when really we have done nothing, or next to nothing: when we have opened no heart, won no confidence, touched no soul; when they amongst whom we have been moving, as spiritual beings, with all that atmosphere of hopes, fears, perplexities, desires, difficulties which evermore hang around them, are as unknown to us and as unreached by us as though we never had been nigh them; when our visit has hardened one, tired another, satisfied the formalism of a third, and been endured by a fourth, who is greedy of gain, as establishing a present or prospective claim to some gift or earthly advantage, but when it has not aroused one sinner, comforted one penitent, directed one in perplexity, or edified one saint. For souls are not to be reached and saved in this mechanical way. We are not in this way to fling religion at them, and let it take its chance with them; but we are, following the example of our blessed Master, to seek to open



their hearts to it, to win an entrance for the truth through the door of the affections; to deal with them one by one, as separate spiritual beings; to get at their difficulties; to teach them how to impart to us a knowledge of their troubles, knowing that unless we can institute and keep alive this spiritual relationship between ourselves and them, we can have very little insight into their true state, and do them but very little good. So that it may happen that we may have to pay them many visits, in which nothing or next to nothing may seem to be done towards the great result, in which we may scarcely speak about religion, whilst yet all the time we are fitting the golden key into the intricate and delicate wards of the soul, and looking on to the day when the result of all this labour shall be attained, in a trusting spiritual confidence on their side, and a true leading of their souls to Christ for rest and peace on ours.

But then, on the other side, it is most easy to let our pastoral visitations down to the mere level of worldly civility and kindness; to let them begin and end in a gossiping garrulity, or a useless waste of time spent in unmeaning enquiries and formal answers. Now to avoid these great dangers, there is need on our part of continual diligence in its highest exercise. For, first, we must really care about them; about their interests, their concerns, and, above all, about their souls. If we do not, all our seeming solicitude about them will be unreal, and they will very soon detect its hollowness. And we cannot thus care about them, without first, of course and above all, valuing highly their souls; and then, and beyond this, without really thinking of them

at other times ; having their cares, their characters, their trials, and all their circumstances before us ; so that when we come to see them, we come to them not as persons with whom we are officially connected, and whom we call "our parishioners," but as men and women whom we know and care for, with flesh and blood, with hearts to feel and instincts to instruct them, with temptations, and sorrows, and joys, the secret weight or sparkling brightness of which we do really enter into ; "rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep."

And then, besides this, if we are really to do our work herein, we must study the different characters of men, and be able to understand them ; and we must muse over the particular characters with which we have to deal, that we may speak to real men in their individuality, and not to cold, bare abstractions bearing human names. Men must be won individually ; they cannot be saved in the mass. And we must therefore deal with our people one by one in their own separateness. Farther than this, too, we must have made some real progress in the difficult science of dealing with souls. Unless we have learned this, we never shall have the clear insight or the delicate touch without which we can no more reach and heal the diseases of men's spirits than the surgeon could deal aright with the intricate mechanism of their bodily frames if his eyes were darkened or his fingers maimed. "The priest's lips must keep knowledge." And it is not a little diligence, depend upon it, which will give us this wisdom. There must be reading, and experience and watchfulness, and acquaintance with our own souls, and the habit of advising

others, before we can in any degree attain to it. The spirit of the most commonplace man, if you come indeed to deal with it, is too deep a mystery to be fathomed in a moment. Every soul has in it such capacities, such powers, such wants, that it requires a master's eye to see into it, and a master's hand to guide it and supply its needs. We must be deep and constant students of the mystery of man's nature in the light of Holy Scripture, and under the teaching of experience. if we would be competent to be guides of souls. And then, further, there must be the carrying all this out into act; the giving any necessary amount of time to any one case; the bearing patiently with its delays, windings, unreasonable doubts and fears, with its relapses and its changes.

Few things are more dangerous than a mere perfunctory discharge of this duty. If we allow our ministerial intercourse to degenerate into a mere routine duty; if we treat it as a charm, the mere performance of which has some good effect about it, the souls of our people are sure to suffer greatly. Take, for instance, the common expression for a clergyman's visit, that he has gone to carry to some sick or perhaps dying man "the consolations of religion." Now if it were true that the consolations of religion were all that men needed, such an expression might convey the truth. Where that is the message which the soul needs, Christ's minister should indeed be a very son of consolation. But then he should be this only when it is the message which the soul needs. It may be that it is awakening, not consoling, which that sick man requires; and that if you go to salve his conscience with consolation, you will be found to have been but a "dauber with un-

tempered mortar." You may be dealing with that soul as you would with the body if you gave strong drink to one gasping in a fever, or opiates to one sinking into a lethargy. Now this surely would bring upon you the awful guilt of the blood of souls; and yet how readily we fall into such a snare; for our own weakness exposes us to the temptation. It is so easy, and so agreeable a mode of fulfilling the duties of our office. To speak smooth words is so pleasant; and there is so much in a ministry which deals in them which tends to flatter our own self-love; for the visits of such a pastor are almost universally welcome. The physician who prescribes pleasant narcotics is sure to be popular. And in cases of soul-sickness, where the fatal effects of such treatment cannot easily be seen, the people so generally "love to have it so." They readily content themselves with the soothing pastoral visitation as a substitute for repentance; and so souls are lost. We must therefore resolve to search out the true characters of those to whom we minister, and like the courageous surgeon who probes to the very bottom the wound which he would cure, ascertain what treatment they really require, lest we heal slightly their deadly wound. Here, too, there is need of diligence. We cannot at once discern the characters of men. Often unconsciously, and often consciously, they hide the truth from themselves and from us. The wounded part shrinks instinctively from the touch. We must be patient, observant, open-eyed to symptoms. We must not decide in haste. The careful physician of the body does not trust to his remembrance of his patient's case; he makes his notes of it; and when he comes to minister to him again, he

compares the present state accurately with the past. Thus he weighs doubtful indications, unmasks ambiguous symptoms, and learns at last the real state of things with which he has to deal. Nor can we discharge aright our duty with less care than he can his. We should meditate on the spiritual cases which are in our charge ; pray over them ; gather from the great storehouse of God's Word the medicine they need. What care and toil does all this imply ? We sometimes hear men speak of small parishes as if they gave no scope for a pastor's activity. How different would be the estimate if full attention were given to this inner, diligent, careful treatment of even a few souls. What a knowledge of the heart of man would they yield to the clergyman who thus watched them with a searching, loving eye ; who sought often for insight into them ; who weighed on his knees the remedies to be applied ; who prayed earnestly for the teaching and enlightening of the Holy Spirit of God !

Apply these thoughts but to one or two of the most marked characters with which we have to deal.

First, you should endeavour to ascertain the great question of all ; Is the soul to which you are ministering really converted to God or not ? Has the man really repented of his sin ? Has he really sought and found pardon in the Blood of Christ ? If not, the mere comforting him in his sin, instead of comforting him by making him know his utter sinfulness, and drawing him to Christ for salvation, and so for true peace, is really nothing else than slaying his soul.

But then it is not easy for us to form a right judgment even on this broad question. We must know the



man's daily life ; we must feel cautiously and tenderly the pulse of his spirit ; we must be ready to cast off preconceived notions, to fling aside all cramping party prepossessions : there is no stereotyped formulary by which we can obtain the solution as to any soul of this great problem : decency of life is not enough ; feelings are not enough, doctrinal correctness is not enough ; and yet there may be true conversion of heart, where the doctrinal statements are far from correct, where the feelings are very sluggish, where the utterance of the heart is very slow ; and if we jump to a conclusion either way, we may make sad a heart which God has not made sad, or buoy up with false hopes a soul which unfounded hopes are ruining.

Surely the man who would face such difficulties as these must be diligent in waiting on his ministry : and yet these are but a sample of ten thousand others.

For the heart with which we have to deal may have been truly converted to God, but may be dry, cold, formal, even growing estranged from Him. There may be in it very little of the life of the Spirit. And you must find out, if possible, the cause of this declension. It may be some secret sin which has been chilling the man's prayers, freezing up his soul ; often it is some secret grudge or unkindly feeling which is harboured in his mind, and indulged every now and then ; or it may be some discontent with what God has ordered for him ; or it may be the rise of worldly cares, or business ; or too free an indulgence in lawful pleasures ; or the formality which is so natural to us all ; but whatever the cause is, it is your duty, if possible, to find it out, and to lead the man to see it, and repent of it before his



God. All this, I need hardly say to you, requires the greatest diligence, the most unsparing and loving watchfulness, if we would discharge our duty herein aright.

Nor must we, in estimating the full amount of labour which this requires of us, put out of sight what our Church would so manifestly have us remember, when she pledges us to this labour and diligence not only with "the sick" but also with "the whole" within our cures. For peculiar difficulties beset us in dealing with both the one and the other.

The sick we can easily find at home, and our visits to them will generally be received with gladness: with them our main difficulties will commonly be connected with the spiritual conduct of our intercourse with them. We shall have first to see that we are not welcomed merely for the temporal relief which we may minister to their necessities, whilst our spiritual offices are barely endured for its sake. Even our blessed Lord was followed by numbers, not for the words of heavenly wisdom which flowed from His lips, but because a carnal generation "did eat of the loaves and were filled." To meet this difficulty in any degree requires no little care on our part: to do it we must take real pains to separate between our almsgiving and our spiritual ministrations; we must be careful to relieve those who need relief at times when we do not bring nigh to them our spiritual aid. As a general rule, we should never end a visit of spiritual instruction with the half-crown which they may need for the supply of the body. It is most painful to see how the neglect of caution on this point leads the poor to a carnal hunger for the pastor's visits, which can hardly disguise its whining importunity through the

time in which he is endeavouring to draw their thoughts to heavenly things.

And even if this difficulty be overcome, how many remain behind! Sickness is a time in which it is specially difficult to begin a real and deep work of religion. The mere intermission of ordinary temptations, and the temporary withdrawal of the world, its interests, and its pleasures, make self-deceit so easy; whilst the infirmities and necessities of sickness make any great amount of self-denial and devotion so nearly impossible, that it is a time full of peculiar difficulties for the commencement of a holy life. And this affects all our ministerial intercourse with the sick. Thus, for instance, we are too often received merely as one of the fitting concomitants of sickness; respectability requires it, and even conscience, which might be troublesome if it were not lulled to sleep by the opiates of a little religious conversation and the employment of fitting forms. Into such a sick room we are often called; the anxious friends around the sick bed, and the manifest physical weakness of the sick man, seem to forbid our employing any startling or even arousing measures; and yet there is a human soul for which Christ died, with its all but infinite capacities of sorrow or of joy, about to wing its flight to the Judgment-seat. In such a case the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, used honestly and carefully, at least as a track, with the pouring forth of our soul in prayer, is perhaps the best that we can do. But who that thinks at all about it can fail to see the exceeding difficulty of dealing wisely and faithfully with such cases.

But if sickness has its own difficulties, the visita-

tion of those in health is beset also by its own perplexities.

The first great difficulty is to reach "the whole" without intrusiveness or inconvenient visits. We must not break in on the meal-time of the poor; we must not hinder the wife's household business; we can rarely join ourselves to the labourer at his work: and even when we have gained access to them, we have to guard against the risk either of disgusting those with whom we have to deal, or of making them hypocrites by obtruding on them religious talk. What skill, what temper, what self-recollection, what pliancy of mind, what true and unfeigned interest in them, what untiring labour are needed before we can overcome such difficulties as these! Surely instead of deeming lightly of them, we should rather say, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

For, my brethren, does not all this demand the greatest diligence in each one of us? Think how often our love of ease must be mortified before we can lead such a life as this implies. How many favourite tastes must be abandoned before our people can be really to us objects of such supreme interest. For whatever stands in the way of this must be abandoned if we would keep this promise. This is why a really efficient parish priest cannot be a keen sportsman or an eager politician, or a man of pleasure or devoted to society, or even given up to literature, because he cannot be any of these, and yet be indeed giving the first and best part of his heart and affections to his people, as he must do if he intends to save himself and them. And if he really means to keep his promises herein, he must be diligent in every part of his work. Perhaps, for instance, he has not naturally any

liking for children; an idle clergyman, so disposed, leaves his school to the schoolmaster, and the children who will not come to school to that busy school which the devil keeps for uncared-for children in most of our streets. But meanwhile, what immense opportunities of advancing his work does he leave unimproved. Not only do the children themselves grow up without the influence of his ministerial character colouring the tissues of their early thoughts and feelings, but all those avenues of natural affection to their offspring, by which he might have approached the hearts of the parents also, are closed to him. Yet, on the other hand, he must have had many an interrupted meal, got up when he wished to lie in bed, left friends with whom he wished to stay, refused invitations he would have liked to accept, borne with noise, and fractiousness, and dulness, and close rooms, if he has indeed won the children to himself and to God, and, through them, many parents who but through them would have been for ever unapproachable.

And so also it must have been with him in many other parts of his work. Some of us have a natural fear of catching disorders, which makes it a real trial to go and visit men who are suffering under various forms of sickness. Now in such cases we ought to use the same precautions against infection which would be used for himself by a prudent physician of the body; but we no more ought to stay away from such places than he would: and if we do, how can we believe, or how can others believe, that we care as much for men's souls as he cares for their bodies. With men of a certain temperament the inclination to guard their own safety by staying away is a great temptation. And yet to

yield to it is really fatal to our usefulness, not only with the sick, whom we thus leave with no man to help them just when the angel of the Lord has troubled the waters of life around them, but with all our parishioners; who cannot believe in the reality of the priestly office, or our own sincerity in discharging it, if they see us at such a moment shrink back from our manifest duty.

And the like failure may be brought about by a thousand other causes. To put out of sight careless and absolutely worldly-minded men, mere softness makes some men avoid the labour of visiting, and the foul atmosphere of sick rooms. Mere shyness makes others shrink from that close grappling of mind with mind and spirit with spirit which is an essential condition for dealing effectually with the soul of another. They draw back with a sort of instinctive avoidance of the realities of the inner life, just as they perceive that the stricken soul is about to open to them its grief, and often half nervously throw in some unmeaning generality, which shuts up for ever the heart which might, had it truly revealed its secret burden, have been led on to Christ.

Now with all these temptations before you, can you wonder that in your solemn Ordination hour this should be made one of your vows,—that you should be diligent in your work as a guide of souls? For how much easier is it to be an admired pulpit clergyman than to be a diligent school and sick-room pastor? And yet what utter unreality reigns in parishes where the pastor is lost even in the preacher: in them the guide of souls really knows nothing of his people; they move round about him as unmeaning figures, but as to all the world which is



within each one of them, he knows as little as if he or they were inanimate corpses.

How, then, are you to keep this promise? You must, believe me, if you would be safe here, not only set yourself to the actual work with all your might, but you must also beforehand make provision for its due discharge by guarding against what may hinder it, and by furnishing your souls with all which they need to fit them for their daily patient discharge of a difficult duty.

Thus, for example,—

I. You must, from the very beginning of your ministry, form your habits of life on a self-denying model. It is not in vain that we are charged to “endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.” The creeping moss of soul-sluggishness can be kept off only by the continual acts of a vigorous self-denial. Whoever enters on the ministry as an easy profession, whoever suffers it to become such to him, is sure to lose the distinctive features of the pastor’s character. The details of our duty are one by one so easily thrust aside by the solicitations of a love of ease, that we have no safety but in an early and an universal warfare with the principle of self-indulgence.

II. Next we must know and constantly remember the inestimable value of the souls for which we watch: we must often muse on their awful capacity of life or death everlasting, and on the certain connection between these almost infinite issues and what seem to be the trifles of this present life. We must ask ourselves, when tempted by the love of ease or this world, how can we meet them before the bar of God if, through our sinful self-indulgence, we have let them perish; how, in that awful



hour, can we endure their cry for vengeance against us; how can we cry for mercy, clinging as we must do for ourselves to that cross which, had we been faithful, might have saved both them and us?

III. And then, further, we must remember the price at which they were redeemed, and Who it is that has committed them to our charge. Can it be that the everlasting Son of the Father did not disdain to shed His blood for them, and that we slight them? Can it be that He left the bosom of the co-eternal Father, and all the inconceivable blessedness of heaven, in order to redeem them, and that we, for the sake of a little passing pleasure or the softness of a drowsy ease, can let them perish, even though the Blood of our dearest Lord was shed for their redemption? How can we meet Him upon the judgment-seat if we have let the flock perish which He entrusted to our keeping?

And this leads us, brethren beloved in Christ, to that which must be our chiefest guard from this peril of indolence.

IV. We must seek more earnestly and more continually from Him the gift of love to Himself. This is His own lesson to us; the "Lovest thou Me?" must go before the "Feed My lambs;" nothing else but love to Him will keep alive and quick within our hearts a true love to them; nothing else will keep our hearts tender in the routine of duties. When we find, as we shall find, those for whom we are set to labour, not what a glowing imagination may beforehand paint them, but as, for the most part, they will be, cold, dull, hard, ungrateful, uninteresting persons, then nothing but a true love to Christ will keep us from the upgrowth of that callous

carelessness about them which, in our Judge's ear, is evermore the utterance of the murderer's voice, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Here, then, is the close of all. If we would watch diligently for our brethren, we must love our Lord. We must, beneath His Cross, on our knees, in our own struggle against sin, in receiving our own deliverance, in hearing His voice, in receiving His benediction, in eating His flesh, in drinking His blood, learn to love Him, and for His sake to love our brethren. Then will the most difficult duties become light, because all things are easy to love; then shall we in our daily visiting and ministrations be taught by the Spirit of our Lord how to copy Him, and understand His words:—"If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."



# Diligence in Prayer.

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“WILL YOU BE DILIGENT IN PRAYER?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS VIII.

### DILIGENCE IN PRAYER.

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MY BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—The questions which we have just been considering address themselves to your work; but the enquiry which we have now reached is aimed at what is far deeper than even your work for God in your parishes. It deals with that which must be the one true preparation for all real work,—with the state of your own souls, with the furnishing of your own spirits. It contains within itself two distinct and most important enquiries, into each of which I desire to enter with you separately, and will therefore, for the present, confine myself to the first of these. This is addressed specially to those who seek the higher order of the ministry, and have therefore need of the greatest strength to meet their greater trials. But it belongs in its measure to those also who seek the office of a deacon; nay, though applying above all others to us to whom is entrusted this perilous ministry of souls, yet does it belong to every one, be he clergyman or layman, who would follow Christ, and be a partaker of His glory. It is to the question, “Will you be diligent in prayer?” that I would next call your attention.

Of the meaning of the question I need say very little. Plainly, it refers to all descriptions of prayers,—to private, social, public, stated, occasional, ejaculatory prayers:



in all it requires from you the promise of diligence. Nor need I say much of what constitutes diligence in prayer. It is not, of course, merely the giving up to them any great length of time ; though under ordinary circumstances without length of time given to them, where such time is at our command, there can be no true diligence in prayer. But for true diligence there must be far more than this : there must be that full application of the heart and mind ; that lifting up of the soul to God ; that drawing out of the affections after Him ; that cleaving of the desires to Him ; that ardour and yet that patience ; that humility and yet that boldness, which time cannot measure ; which make long prayers seem short to him who offers them, and short prayers, if necessity shall make them such, count as long prayers with Him who for Christ's sake receives mercifully the soul that followeth hard after Him.

This, then, is what you promise : and, believe me, beloved brethren, there can be nothing of deeper moment for the success of your ministry. Indeed, whilst we may find instances of success, and sometimes of great and most unlikely success, in the ministry of those who have lacked almost every other qualification, there can, I believe, be no instances found of a successful ministry which was not full of prayers. Turn where we may we find the praying ministry the successful ministry. To enumerate the instances which establish this relation between supplication and success would be, indeed, to give you the list of all who in their day have done great things for Christ and for their brethren. We may begin with him who in so many respects is the type of all his fellows in the ministry, the holy

apostle St. Paul, who in every letter assures his converts that "night and day he is praying for them exceedingly <sup>a</sup>;" that he is "praying always for them <sup>b</sup>;" that "always in every prayer of his for them all, he is making intercession with joy <sup>c</sup>." Who could say to the Roman Christians, "God is my witness . . . that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers <sup>d</sup>;" to the Ephesians, "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers <sup>e</sup>;" and to the Thessalonians, "We give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers <sup>f</sup>;" and to Timothy, "I thank God . . . that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day <sup>g</sup>;" and to Philemon, "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers <sup>h</sup>." And if we pass on from the apostles' time to that of those who immediately followed them, we find in like manner St. Polycarp, when troubles assailed the Church, "retiring with a few companions from the city, and continuing day and night doing no other thing than praying on behalf of all men, and for the Churches throughout all the world, which was his accustomed use <sup>i</sup>." In this same habitual practice was, no doubt, the strength of that great <sup>4</sup> man, Cardinal Borromeo, who, in spite of the many corruptions of the faith with which the Church of Rome was deformed, reached to a pitch of holiness which few have exceeded, and, without any great natural abilities, wrought everywhere around him a marvellous work of social and spiritual renovation; of whom we are told that "he counted addiction to prayer no

<sup>a</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 10.<sup>b</sup> Col. i. 3.<sup>c</sup> Philipp. i. 4.<sup>d</sup> Rom. i. 9.<sup>e</sup> Ephes. i. 16.<sup>f</sup> 1 Thess. i. 2.<sup>g</sup> 2 Tim. i. 3.<sup>h</sup> Philem. 4.<sup>i</sup> St. Pol., Mart., c. v.

less the aid of his episcopate than the delight of his soul, and never attempted any great work without specially commending it to the prayers of holy men;" and of whom, again, we read that, being in the habit of giving five hours of the twenty-four to prayer and meditation, if any greater matter than usual threatened either himself or the Church, he would spend the whole of the night which followed his busy day in watching and supplication.

Nor is it difficult to see why the habit of prayer is indeed of the very first importance. For, first, this must be so, from the very constitution of our office. That office is a part of the ministry of the Spirit: it has its rise from the coming of the Comforter and the gifts of Pentecost. Though their designation to the office was from the Lord before His ascension, the apostles themselves "tarried at Jerusalem till they were endued with" this "power from on high." It was when He ascended up on high that He gave gifts to men, "and He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers<sup>j</sup>."

Here was the origin of the Christian ministry. It is a dispensation of the Spirit. \* From that is all its authority, all its strength, all its efficacy. When we speak with power, it is because the Holy Ghost speaks by us to hearts which, but that His breath breathed upon them, would be hard beneath our words as the nether mill-stone. When we perform the acts which He has set us to perform, they are effectual acts, and not empty mocking appearances, because He works them by us. Thus it is that in Holy Baptism, though administered by

<sup>j</sup> Eph. iv. 11.

our feebleness, infants are regenerated and grafted into Christ: thus it is that we break the bread and pour out the wine, and faithful souls verily and indeed eat spiritually the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood: thus it is that when we use, as He directs, the keys of His kingdom, the currents of grace are stayed or poured out upon the souls committed to us: thus it is that, when we declare His pardon to the penitent, the blessed sound of absolution steals through the listening ear into the waiting soul. All obtain alike their power from this one great truth,—that we are in the kingdom of His grace; that the Holy Ghost the Comforter is with us; and that our ministry, which would be in itself so poor and helpless, is full of all the mighty and marvellous operations of the powers of the world to come.

Now, then, from this it follows of necessity that a praying ministry must be a powerful ministry. For it is prayer which joins our weakness to God's strength; it is prayer which honours God; it is in answer to prayer that the Blessed Spirit works; it is by prayer that we awaken that breath of His without which all is dry, and dark, and dead.

He, then, that goes without prayer about his ministry defies a host of cruel enemies to instant battle, and leaves behind him all his strength. Samson shorn of his locks of might is a feeble image of such a miserable man; for worse than Philistines are lying in wait against him, and before him is a more shameful overthrow, a darker blindness, and a more hopeless degradation than that which overtook the weakened Nazarite.

But this is not all. For not only must this be so because the whole strength of our ministry depends upon

the direct personal work of God the Holy Ghost, but further, it is also true in those parts of our office in which we are fellow-workers with God. For, first, the whole of our ministry will more or less be coloured by our own spiritual character. As we are real or unreal, carnal or spiritual, earthly or heavenly, so will also be our ministry. If we are sayers of words, our life will be formal, and it will inevitably tend to engender formalists. If we are cold, dogmatic, dry, exact in outward observances, but withal of an unloving spirit, our people will be cold, quarrelsome, and unloving dogmatizers also. If, on the other hand, we through God's grace have learned to lie low before the Cross of Christ, if our burden has there dropped off from us, if the Blood of sprinkling has fallen on us, if our spirits have been set free, if in the joy of Christ's atonement we have learned with open face to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," if we "walk in the Spirit," something of all this will commonly, by the working of God's great grace, be stamped on some of those amongst whom we labour. There are, of course, exceptions: for God is a Sovereign, and He works as a Sovereign; and it is ours to watch in meek patience all His working, whether it be as we would have it or not; but as the general rule, the spirit of the pastor's own soul breathes through his ministry. That he should therefore be a man of prayer is of the first importance for its success, for without this He cannot be himself a man of God. And if he would rise to high measures of holiness, he must be a man of much prayer; in this all the saints agree. "If thou wouldst be free from the entanglements of thy passions," says St. Anselm, "rise by night, and seek thy



freedom in prayers and tears before God." "For though," says St. Bernard, "the love of God tends always towards Him, yet sometimes does it burst forth with intenser longings; above all, at the hour of prayer<sup>k</sup>." But apart from attaining to great holiness, without diligent prayer the minister of God can least of all men be even safe. For against him, for his office's sake, Satan rages specially, and bends all his weapons. And it is from the coldness and infrequency of our prayers that he succeeds so often. For not to speak now of professedly careless and openly irreligious pastors, from whom may God in His mercy deliver us, every great ministerial fall could doubtless be traced, if we could see all, to the want or the intermission of prayer; or to the allowance of carelessness in its exercise. For this opens the door for the entrance of every kind of evil. How often has the want of watching unto prayer first allowed the wandering gaze, which stirred up the evil imagination, which then remained on the mind as a defiling stain, until at last the evil is accomplished, and "lust hath conceived and brought forth sin<sup>l</sup>." How often have worldly principles grown strong within the soul in the slackness of those prayers which once kept them down. For how many a sudden and surprising fall, as they seem to men whose eyes can scan only the bare outside of facts, has retirement neglected and hurried prayer been long secretly preparing: how must the roots of private devotion have been suffered to decay and waste, before the breath of a summer's evening could lay low the mighty tree which had braved unmoved a thousand wintry whirlwinds. How would diligence in prayer have

<sup>k</sup> Serm. XLVI., vol. ii. p. 159.

<sup>l</sup> James i. 15.



kept these men from falling! how would it have stopped the avenues of the heart against carnal imaginations, and laid waste the springing thorns of worldly desires! Vanity and self-consciousness, those sore enemies which are the destruction of so many pastors through their eating out the heart of our public ministrations, would find no room to enter, if in them the soul was drawn up to God, as it would be, if those public offices were but the carrying on of that secret communing with Him in which we had been privately engaged. Such communion, moreover, would fill us with a sense of His majesty for Whom we speak and before Whom we stand to minister. If we came from weeping over our own sins in our secret chamber, we should have a quickness of eye which would shew us how to deal with our people, and a touch so tender that they would bear its necessary handling.

Moreover, as diligent prayer is thus needful for the strength of our ministry as a whole, so is it for all its separate parts.

How, for instance, shall we dare to speak to others, unless we have sought for light and teaching on our knees? "God's minister," says our own Wicliffe, "must be a man of prayer, for he needs the internal instruction of the primary teacher." But, further, it is not only a knowledge of God's truth that we require; we need to be guided into the choice of that truth which is most profitable to our flocks, and to be taught how to utter it aright: and here, too, success is to be won upon our knees, so that, as St. Augustine says, "We may not doubt that this end is to be gained far more by the devotion of our prayers than by any power of eloquence; by our prayers for ourselves and for those to whom

we are about to speak; so that we should be prayers before we are speakers." "For," he says again, "if Esther prayed before she spoke to the king for the temporal advantage of her people, that God would put a word into her mouth, how much more should they pray to receive a like gift, who labour in the word and doctrine for men's eternal salvation<sup>m</sup>." This, we are told, was the custom of our own saintly Fletcher, whose preaching was perpetually preceded, accompanied, and succeeded by prayer, in which he specially sought to be led to a "subject adapted to the conditions of his people; and asked for himself in treating it wisdom, utterance, and power," for them a "serious frame, an unprejudiced mind, and a retentive heart;" and who ever deemed that he could trace in his after success the coldness or the fervour of his prayers. In which conclusion agrees one whose habitual calmness rarely kindled even into fervour: "At the house of prayer," says Erasmus, "let the preacher give himself to profound prayer, and seek wisdom and speech from Him who openeth the mouths of babes and sucklings. It is beyond belief how much light, and vigour, and strength, and readiness flows hence to the preacher."

Who that has tried it will not confirm his words? Who knows not how, as he kneels before God in prayer, seeking for some instructive subject, or the power to handle it, the shadows fly away, the light breaks in, and where all was disorder and darkness, the confused elements now arrange themselves in order and perspicuity before him? Who that has tried knows not what it is to have knelt down with a dry unfeeling spirit which

<sup>m</sup> De Doctrina, lib. iv. c. 32 and 63.

will not care for others, which looks coldly even up to the cross of Christ, which seems so inwardly congealed that no power can melt it, and to find, as he intercedes for others, that the evil spirit does depart from him, and angels come and minister instead.<sup>a</sup>

As to every part of our ministry all this is true. How can we make our pastoral visits profitable unless the Spirit of the Lord give us eyes of living insight, hearts of tender feeling, and words dipped, before we speak them, in heavenly wisdom? How can we enter into the spiritual trials of our people, unless God teach our own minds spiritual realities? and how are these to be learned but in that union of "prayer, meditation, and temptation" which, in the words of Luther, "make a minister?" How can we intercede for our people unless God give us the spirit of prayer? How can we go on striving with and for the obdurate unless we can, like the holy St. Bernard, turn ourselves to what, under a like trial, he calls his "accustomed arms of prayers and tears on their behalf?" How can we walk consistently before them unless He hold us up? In what turn of our ministerial life can we be safe without this help? How can we bear its successes without our head being turned and vain-glory springing up, unless in answer to our prayers He keep us humble? How can we endure all the anxiety, troubles, disappointments, and bitter griefs of this service, unless we can fly to Him as our refuge and our strength; unless we can say, with St. Anselm of old, "But if it be not in the counsels of Thy eternal Will that Thou shouldest by me feed and bless Thy sheep, what do I here? Why do I tarry amongst these tumults,

<sup>a</sup> Epist. 222.

if I am not, through Thy grace, to promote the salvation of my brother? Grant me, then, I beseech Thee, by all Thy pity, Thy heavenly consolation; for this heavy weight, which Thou hast laid upon me, I know not how to bear, and I dare not lay aside. O God, the helper of all that trust in Thee, let not Thy grace forsake, let not Thy mercy leave me."

If, then, a life of prayer be thus essential to our safety and to our success, surely our Church acts tenderly and wisely in pledging us, at the solemn hour of our ordination, to strive earnestly to make it ours.

But there are other reasons, also, why we should be led to make this engagement; and amongst the chief of these is one as to which I wish to speak to you in some detail.

It is well, then, that we should be solemnly engaged to lead a life of prayer, because, rich in blessing, nay, even essential to us as it is, it is one which we can never lead without overcoming many and grievous hindrances. Let us, then, consider for a little what these hindrances are, and how they are to be overcome.

First amongst them stands that which is indeed at the root of all, that we have earthly hearts which naturally start aside from communion with God. Which of us have ever tried to pray, and not found out for himself the reality and the strength of this hindrance? There is, of course, no difficulty in devoting a certain space of time to going through certain forms of devotion. But how hard is it, not once or twice in our lives, but alas! often and often, to do more than this. Merely to realize thoroughly the presence of God is no slight difficulty; harder still is it to believe that the voice of our prayer reaches Him; that in praying we are

doing anything more than practising a certain art upon ourselves,—seeking to attune, so to speak, our own spirits by putting them for a season into a certain attitude, and awakening in them certain desires, that they may receive and retain a certain impress. But how utterly unlike is this to real prayer. For in prayer the soul should indeed breathe itself out in aspirations after the personal God. And as prayer attains to its true character of reaching forth after God, there should be an absolute forgetting of self. In petitions indeed for earthly mercies, or even for the pardon of sin, or for power to resist temptation, or to overcome evil within ourselves, or for the direct gift of special graces,—in these and the like there must be much of self, as the object, mingling with our prayers: we are, as it were, bringing ourselves consciously before God, with our fears, our wants, and our desires, and our mind must therefore dwell much upon ourselves; and when, therefore, the first difficulty of realizing God's presence has been in any degree overcome, if our desire of what we ask for is strong, it does impart of itself a sort of earnestness to our prayers. But this, if our prayers end in this and reach no higher, if they do not mount up to the glory of God as their ultimate object, is, after all, but a dangerous earnestness, which we shall do well to suspect. Baal's worshippers cried unto him from morning until evening, and cut themselves with knives and lancets, in the passionate paroxysms of their earthly earnestness, as they cried importunately unto him, "O Baal, hear us!"

With such earnestness almost all forms of false worship abound; marking plainly that the true object of prayer, God, in His Person and His Holiness, hardly enters into



the cause of this vehemence; shewing that it is the passionate longing for some other end, and not the following hard of the soul after God as its greatest object, which blows into a furnace-heat the breath of this importunity. But from the higher exercises of worship these lower ends are necessarily excluded, and it is in these, therefore, that we find clearly how palsyng and benumbing to the soul is its prevailing earthliness. When we would lie low before the Holy One in simple self-abasement; when we would look up and adore the everlasting Father, the co-eternal Son, our ever-blessed Redeemer, the co-equal Spirit, our Sanctifier; nay, even when we would "praise God in His Holiness," when we would simply supplicate that His will be done in us and by us, then how often do we find closed against us, as by walls of brass, the firmament of His power. How hard is it to shut the world out. How soon does adoration drop into mere earthly musing. How, when we have fixed for a moment our thoughts on these everlasting verities, do we find, on self-inspection, that before we were well aware of it, some creeping mist of the earth had overspread our spirit, and shut out from it all the glories of the heavenly vision. Or if we have set ourselves to pray for our people, for our Church's revival, for the breathing over her of the breath of the Spirit, for the awakening of souls that are asleep, for the conversion of souls dead in trespasses and sins, for the baring of the Lord's Arm, for the lifting up of the cross of Christ in its life-giving power and glory, how languid do we find our spirits, how cold our desires, how formal our petitions, how short-breathed our intercessions, as though the very



atmosphere of those heavenly heights were too pure and keen for our grosser nature. Here, then, is our first besetting hindrance. An earthly heart in its dulness and its coldness continually seems as if it would not and could not be wakened up to pour out before God the melody of a contrite, trusting, loving, worshipping spirit.

But further, this first difficulty is aggravated by others. Thus with many of us it really is hard to find time for prolonged, continuous, constant prayer. To say nothing of other interruptions,—which, alas! in spite of the comparative shelter afforded to us by our separated life, do yet abound,—even our ministerial occupations seem often to stand in our way. We are, perhaps, in a large parish, and its claims on our time, and thought, and attention are incessant and harassing; or we are in a small one, and the call and charge of every charitable as well as directly moral or religious interest in it devolves upon us personally; we must in effect keep the school, or it will not be kept; we must manage the clothing-club, and the coal-club, and the lending library; we must tend the sick bodies of our poor, and advise them in their difficulties; then there are sermons to be written, and reading to be kept up, and perhaps constant public services to be conducted, and so there is very little time left for real, secret, undisturbed, concentrated communion with God. About all these hindrances, moreover, there is this special danger, that they are all compounded out of work which must be done, and that they all have about them a savour of directly serving God, and so we are easily persuaded to let these Martha-like engagements stand instead of sitting ourselves at the feet of Jesus, hearing His words, and living in secret

communion with Him. Whence it follows that the more direct is the apparent service in these distractions, the more dangerous they are as hindrances of secret prayer. For whatever it be which hinders that, does really breathe over our souls the drought of death.

For nothing can supply its place. Without it not only our services to others will become perfunctory, or selfish, or busy with externals, and wanting in the holiness and unction of heart-work where Christ has healed the heart; but even beyond this, our public prayers themselves will become cold, formal, and unreal. This is a special danger, the extent of which it is impossible, without experience and much self-watchfulness, to estimate at all aright. When we are first led to take part frequently in public prayers, we seem to be brought into a new atmosphere of devotion. And so indeed we are; and if we are able to offer up our souls to God in them, we shall learn more and more the blessedness of possessing such opportunities of service. But there is about them, as about all spiritual advantages, a special character of danger. Formality lies ever in wait for us under cover of such devotions. We may too soon grow to substitute presence at, or the repetition of, prayers and praises for praise and prayer. We may even be tempted to abbreviate private prayer, under the excuse that we give so much time to public prayer. Whereas I believe that the experience of every one who watches himself closely will prove to him that an increase of the opportunities of public prayer makes an increase in private prayer only the more necessary, unless those public prayers are to be let to grow into formality. Depend upon it, there must be a certain proportion between the

two. You must keep alive the essential habit of setting your soul alone with God through the Mediator, of uniting your own soul's cry with His intercessions in hours of secret communion with Him, if you would keep the heart of your public offices living and sound. Here then, again, is a great danger, which makes it right that you should be pledged of specific obligation to a life of prayer.

But again; our danger herein springs not only from a worldly heart, nor only from ministerial and other occupations, but also from idleness. This is a great snare; often, too, a snare when it is the least suspected. Many of those who seem the busiest are, in the deep of their hearts, the idlest men. There is no other such impregnable fortress in which idleness can entrench itself as business. There are really few more common dangers than a busy idleness. For idleness is not really the opposite of occupation, but of the energetic exertion of our faculties. Now prayer, to be real, must be the concentrated energy of our whole spirit. We must open our whole selves; and we must open ourselves to God. There is nothing which is at once so re-animating and so exhausting as prayer. This pouring out of ourselves, this resolute holding of our souls in a fixed attitude, be it of surveying sin for confession, or listening for absolution, or of intercession, or of supplication, or of praise, requires the fullest tension of our powers; and the realizing God's presence, the laying hold by faith of Him as our portion, the casting ourselves indeed upon Christ the Lord, the committing the whole stream and utterance of thought, longing, feeling, to blend with His prevailing intercessions; the guarding against anything

coming between Him and us; the watching, above all, against the intrusion of self between ourselves and Him, against the growing up of a morbid self-contemplation under a religious light, instead of the simple fixing of the eye of faith on Him,—all this, depend upon it, taxes to the utmost all the faculties of our souls. From this, then, it is that idleness tempts us to shrink. We are tempted to muse, to lose ourselves in abstractions, to waste our time of devotion in an endless flitting of the soul from thought to thought; settling nowhere, mastering nothing, exhausting nothing; or else to be contented with the mere hearing, or reading, or repeating of the words of prayer, or with the glow of mind which attends on social prayer, or with the pleasure which the decent or gorgeous externals of devotion call up in some minds; we are tempted, that is, by every conceivable temptation to escape from the tension, and closeness, and exhaustion of wrestling till the day break with the man who appears unto us, of saying to Him with the inner voice of the spirit He is holding up to strive with Him, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me<sup>o</sup>.” Yet this, and this only, is true, real prayer. And as our natural indolence of spirit must shrink back from this, here again is a new and great danger, and a new reason why, in our solemn ordination hour, we should be pledged to this difficult but yet absolutely essential habit.

But there is yet another cause of difficulty within ourselves, which I may not pass over wholly without notice. The want of practice makes prayer difficult. Though every good thing within us is the direct working of the grace of God, though our very prayer is but the breath

of the soul's desire which He has Himself kindled, though our aspiration after Him is but the expression from our soul of His drawing us unto Himself, yet is it true that every one of our graces, and pre-eminently this of prayer, are, whenever they are real, habits, and not separate acts. From which it follows that we can no more pray aright than do anything else aright, unless in practice our separate acts grow up into habits. No one, therefore, who is short, or infrequent, or hurried, or slovenly in his prayers, can really win or retain the great grace of prayerfulness. And to interrupt our forming habits of prayer, all the hindrances which we have already considered exert their full power. The earthly heart pleads for pauses and intermissions; business and occupation break in upon the hour of devotion; and idleness, with its softness and its opiates, resolves the separate acts of supplication into such formalities or such self-indulgences, that they cannot by an endless multiplication of themselves form any habit of true prayer. So that for this reason, too, we are brought at our ordination face to face with the difficulty, that we may see and know it beforehand, and set ourselves in God's strength in very deed to overcome it.

But even yet we have not exhausted all our hindrances to this most needful habit. For besides those which arise from ourselves, there are those which are stirred up by our great spiritual enemy. And these are neither few nor light. He bends, indeed, the whole force of his temptations to impede us here; for he well knows the strength of the weakest servant of God who flies in his weakness to prayer. He knows that all mighty works for God are done by God's saint upon his knees;



that it is from his hour of prayer that the preacher draws his true power for converting the careless, for awakening the drowsy, for comforting the downcast, for confirming and stirring up the saint. He knows the insight into God's truth, the love of God's word, the self-knowledge, the humility, the faith, the ardent thirst after God, the repose on Christ, the simple trust to His Cross, the value of His atonement, the dread and hatred of sin, the tenderness of conscience, and the patience and gentleness towards others which are bred in God's servants as they commune face to face with their Lord; and so, above and beside all other temptations, he haunts their hours of prayer with his pestilent presence, and his most numerous and most dangerous darts. He works upon us through every one of our own natural weaknesses; stirring up at one time all the natural corruption of the earthly heart, that he may raise so thick a cloud of worldliness that the breath of our fainting prayer may be beaten by it back to the earth. He acts at another time through the weakness of those around us, enticing us, through their lower standard of practice, to deem our warmer desires extravagant, and so to drop our own higher aspirations to the established level of short, or rare, or cold devotions. Specially, too, I think, may any one who watches himself closely trace to his devices the hindrances to prayer which spring from the abundance of other occupations. For who has not known how some other duty rises at times suddenly before our eyes, when we are on our knees, with an urgency of importunity for its immediate discharge, and a pictured necessity for everything being set aside to secure its being instantly attended to, which bear on



sort of relation to the estimate we should form of its importance when we are off our knees? who cannot trace in all this one of the cunning sleights of the enemy to lead us away from that communion with God in which only we can indeed find the common basis for the performance of any duty. And so it is with every other form of difficulty or temptation which may hinder our prayers. He only, who knows every avenue of the heart of man, because He is the true man, and because for our sakes He too endured the breathing over His pure soul of the poisonous whisper of the great enemy's lies,—He only knows through what secret channels the evil one is permitted, for our trial, and for God's final glory, to harass our prayers. He only can, and He assures us that He will, for every one who in His strength seeks indeed to resist the enemy, so utterly rebuke him that he shall flee from us.

Great need have we of this help. For there are special evils which deface and weaken the prayers even of the most earnest Christian, if he is left even for a season to himself. There is the great evil of an unholy boldness. How many men manifestly confound a rash familiarity with a childlike confidence! How do they speak to God as if He were not in heaven, or as if they were not upon the earth! What rash utterances burst from their unchastened lips! what daring expressions of their religious opinions, hardly veiled under the decent formality of an address to the Most High! What indevout repetitions of their favourite views pervade what they call their prayers! How little in all this is there of that deep prostration of the whole being before God, which leads beings who approach nearest to

the eternal throne, while with two wings they fly, with twain to cover their faces, and with twain their feet !

Or if this danger is escaped, what timidity is there in the prayers of many. Often they seem to be painful deprecations of a being terrible only for His power, rather than the breathings of a child's heart, pouring into the bosom of infinite love its cry of "Abba Father."

Or if this timidity is overcome, how often is it replaced by coldness and formality. The warmth of prayer is so soon chilled down; the very atmosphere of the earth seems to congeal it into the frost-work of formalism; it is too often regarded by us as an act which is appointed to be done, and which we need not therefore fear to do, and from which, when done, certain results will follow. There must, we know, be a right intention, and what attention there can be, and then the end will be obtained. But oh! how unlike is this to the soul breathing out its sorrow, laying down its burden, and drawing in, from the Face of the Almighty Father, the radiance of holy brightness, which is to be seen, even upon the commonest features of him who has indeed prayed, when he comes down from the mountain of communion with his God.

Such, my brethren, are our difficulties; but let me not close with this somewhat discouraging enumeration. Let me rather suggest to you a few words at once of encouragement and counsel as to the mode in which they may be met and overcome.

First, then, for encouragement.

Many, subtle, and recurring as these hindrances are, the life of every saint of God proves that they may be over-mastered. They have beset every child of God,

and by every one they have been in the end successfully resisted. We may be assured that we, too, may over them be made "more than conquerors."

Only let us strive aright. And, first, as the root of all our difficulty lies in the hindrance to communion with God which must be found in an earthly heart, we must begin by striving against the rule of this master-evil. Here, as elsewhere, we are met by the paradox of the Christian life; by man's weakness and man's strength. We must overcome the earthly heart if we would pray, and it is by prayer that it must be overcome. Communion with God must raise our affections heavenwards, but we must watch as well as pray, if we would commune with our Lord. No man can rise from a slothful, or self-indulgent, or worldly life, into the heights of heavenly contemplation. As well might the snared bird, with the clinging lime upon his wing, expect to soar upward to the skies, as the soul which is heavy with earthly cares, and pleasure, and indulgences, mount up to the pure atmosphere of God's revealed presence. The man who would indeed, in his hour of prayer, find the presence of God, and hold communion with his Lord, must live in habitual watchfulness; must taste lightly and with self-recollectedness even of lawful pleasures. The same rule, too, must govern his business as his pleasures. He may, indeed, fearlessly discharge whatever duty God puts upon him, and he may do it with all his might; but he must be careful not to lade himself with the thick clay of unnecessary occupations. And in the busiest life there must be pauses and retirements; times for thought and self-examination; times when the overheated wheels of continual motion may rest and cool;

times when the dust which will settle on the soul amidst even necessary worldly business may be swept aside; times when in the stillness of the spirit the dews of God's grace may fall with refreshing power upon its drooping verdure.

Nor is this enough: if we would be men of prayer, we must watch as carefully against idleness as against over-occupation. The soul must be braced up by holy resolutions and earnest efforts for the severe reality of converse with God, and it must be kept from slothfulness by work for God. There is a dreamy, listless, morbid condition of soul, the sure consequence and the curse of indolence, which is most utterly opposed to true prayer. Many, alas! are its victims, and often most unconscious of their state. In such souls prayer degenerates into an unreal self-contemplation. The man thinks himself growing in spirituality, when he is only practising on himself with increasing power the delusion of the hypochondriac, who mistakes the morbid fancies of his own sickened nerves for the verities of external reality. Prayer must make a life of action spiritual, and action must make a life of prayer real. Here, as elsewhere, we must "strive" (energize) "to enter in at the straight gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." Practice, too, will help you, if you will force yourself to use it; no activity in work for God need prevent your doing so; you may fill up the inevitable chinks of the busiest life with continual prayer. Mingle it thus with all you do. Before all ministerial exertion, before study, before preaching, before visiting the sick, pray evermore; never dare to approach these holy things but with a soul which has been just before calmed, cleansed, elevated, and strengthened by com-

munion with God. And then, in your work, as well as before it, pray. Shoot up from the midst of the busiest employments, these arrows of the Lord's deliverance; yea, and follow your work with prayer; let secret prayer harrow in the seed of God's Word whensoever you have sown it, whether broadcast in preaching, or by dropping its living truth into separate souls. And then set apart some special times for more special prayer; your birthday, your ordination-day, your days of thanksgiving for great mercies, your anniversaries of sadness, may all afford you such opportunities; and as you thus resolutely practise it, you will gain the true power of prayer. Only let no difficulty daunt you. Resolve to overcome, and you will succeed. Difficulties in prayer are a mark of the need of practice, and it is by God's blessing upon resolute practice that they must be overcome. If at your hour of prayer you feel disinclined to devotion, conquer that disinclination, not by reasoning with yourself, but by beginning to pray. Henry Martyn records that his heart was often warmed in its utmost coldness by his beginning to intercede for those whom he loved. If when you are rising from your knees you look sadly back on wandering thoughts, on desires which have been beaten down to the earth, and upon scattered imaginations, instead of yielding in the conflict, kneel down and pray again your unprayed prayer with a more earnest effort to lay all your wants, and above all, your want of the spirit of prayer, before your God. It is not written in vain, as the one law of our success here, "Continuing instant in prayer."

Here, too, must be your strength against the temptations of the enemy. Pray for the spirit of prayer; pray



for the power to pray. Prayer is eminently the gift of God. Not more directly does the sun in heaven draw out the fragrance of the spicy grove than does the light of God's countenance waken out of the waiting heart the breath of its desire. Your very prayer is given you by God—it is His work in you—His before it is yours—the working of His grace within you, without which you could never have prayed. Ask, then, continually from Him the power to ask. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened<sup>a</sup>.”

Lastly, join all your prayers with a conscious intention to the intercession of your Lord. It is through Him only that you can approach unto the Father; into that presence you can only enter sprinkled with His Blood. He takes you by the hand and leads you in; He offers up for you the poor earth-bound prayer, which scarcely struggles upward from your heavy heart; but joined to His intercession it mounts at once to God. He bears the golden censer, and much incense is there in it, even the prayers of all saints. And with that prevailing breath your creeping supplications intermingle. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us<sup>r</sup>.” Fear not, then; for the intercession of the Eternal Son must lose its power and prevalence before the faintest whisper of the penitent heart can be repulsed or overlooked. Think of this in your hour of weakness and despondency; think of this, and lift up your head, for your prayers, even yours, offered up by Christ, shall enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, “and whatsoever ye ask, believing, that ye shall receive<sup>s</sup>.”

<sup>a</sup> Matt. vii. 7.<sup>r</sup> Heb. vii. 25.<sup>s</sup> Matt. xxi. 22.





# Diligence in the Study of Holy Scripture.

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“WILL YOU BE DILIGENT IN PRAYERS, AND IN READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND IN SUCH STUDIES AS HELP TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SAME, LAYING ASIDE THE STUDY OF THE WORLD AND THE FLESH?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS IX.

### DILIGENCE IN THE STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

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**M**Y BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—The question to which we now proceed bears, like the last, not directly upon your external ministrations, but upon the maintenance of that life of God within your souls, which must be kept vigorous and strong within you, if you would have your work either fruitful amongst others or blessed to yourself.

The question is, “Will you be diligent in prayer and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?”

Now this is the second question put to the candidates for ordination concerning the Holy Scriptures, and it will help us to see the exact meaning of your pledge to compare it first with that which you have already given. In the former question, then, you were asked as to your belief in Holy Scripture as the ultimate rule of faith. The enquiry then was, “Whether you believed that it contained sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, and whether you were determined to instruct out of it those committed to your charge.” This question, then, had reference to the matter of your teaching: it took security of you as to

what you would teach; that your teaching should be the pure Word of God, and not the fables or inventions of men. And so the same question, with but little variation, was addressed to the candidates for Deacon's orders as well as to those who sought the Priesthood. For it is a part of the Deacon's special charge "to read the Scripture to the people," and so he was questioned as to his own faith in it, and as to his purpose of reading it to the people. But no question answering to that which we to-day consider is put to the candidates for Deacon's orders; whilst in the office for the consecration of a Bishop this question re-appears, in some degree enlarged. This restriction of the question to the higher orders of the ministry might of itself lead us to see its special object; for it shews us that it bears upon that part of the ministerial work which is not to be entrusted to the Deacon. The Deacon is to read the Word of God to the people, and if specially licensed by the Bishop, but not otherwise, he may preach. But the Priest is distinctly commissioned to preach; and, yet further, to be "a dispenser of the word of God:" and so in his case this question, bearing upon the new power entrusted to him, is added to the simpler enquiry which alone is addressed to the candidate for Deacon's orders. And for this reason it follows, as you may notice, the engagement of the Priest, which we have already considered, "to banish and drive away all strange doctrine, and to use publicly and privately monitions and exhortations amongst his flock." What, then, is the special meaning of the question in this connexion? Doubtless it has reference to his own qualifications as a teacher. He has already undertaken to teach out of the Scrip-

tures; the rule of his doctrine has been settled. He has further promised boldness, diligence, and care in this work: but how is he to be enabled to teach out of the Scriptures? By knowing them well and practically himself; by seeking continually the aid of God's Spirit, that he may himself understand and receive them; by guarding against those habits of mind which would make him unable to enter into the depths of their hidden meaning. This, then, is the purpose of the question; it is to this you will pledge yourself. It refers directly to the inner life of your own spirit; it refers only indirectly to the act of teaching. It is not saying over again more diffusely, "Will you teach out of the Scriptures?" but it is saying this: "You are about to be made a dispenser of God's Word to others, will you so live that you may be able to dispense it?" And this is brought out even more clearly still as the question reappears in the office for the consecration of Bishops, where it stands thus: "Will you faithfully exercise YOURSELF in the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of the same; so as you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?" Here the meaning of the question is perfectly plain: "The priest's lips are to keep knowledge<sup>a</sup>," but that power of keeping knowledge must itself be the result of being in a certain spiritual condition. "Will you, then," is the enquiry of our Church, "so exercise yourself that by the grace of God you may hope to make that condition yours?"

Now this opens to us a most important subject of

<sup>a</sup> Mal. ii. 7.



enquiry, and one which will lead us to some considerations which may greatly aid us in seeing how we may faithfully fulfil that which we are here called upon to promise. For we are met here by this question; How far is faithfulness or unfaithfulness, as a dispenser of God's Word, connected with the inner life and spiritual state of the minister in Christ's Church? Surely this is a question of awful import to all who are seeking this office. For consider how far it reaches. We sometimes hear it laid down that nothing can be wrong in a clergyman which is not just as wrong in a layman; and so men who wish to lower for themselves the ministerial standard reason backwards. They say, Such and such amusements, as, for instance, field sports, balls, and other such like pastimes, moderately enjoyed, are clearly not wrong in a layman if he is in other respects a good man: why then should they be wrong in a clergyman?

Now the deepest and truest answer to all such questions—and they are very many, and very practical, and some of them, when looked at only in themselves, not a little puzzling,—lies, I think, in the truth with which we are now dealing. For what constitutes in its highest essence the office of Christ's minister? No less than this—that it does really wield the powers of the world to come; that it is truly and indeed a spiritual office, not only because it is concerned about spiritual things, but because, if it is to be discharged aright, the powers of the blessed Spirit of God must accompany the outward acts which Christ's minister performs in the name of Christ. Let the unbelieving world scoff as it may, it still remains true that these powers are in the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost abides with her. By Christ's own word His pre-

sence was promised to the end, and His word is sure. That promise, then, does continue. The Comforter is present with us, as He is not with the world. And what is it that God must intend to convey to us by the promise of a special Presence? Surely it is that He condescends to our infirmities, and employs our language. And with us bodily presence and the power of performing any works are so identical, that we naturally associate the two together; so, when God means to raise our expectations of the certainty of His working His work within us, He, Who by the necessity of His divine nature is always present everywhere, speaks of Himself as being specially present with us in the offices of His Church. And how then does God work in the Church of Christ? Surely by Sacraments and means of grace; by a living ministry, in the performance of its special functions; by acting through His ministers upon the souls and spirits of those to whom they minister; by acting through them as His instruments, sometimes merely officially, so that what they do according to His will, He does,—as when they minister the Sacraments, or declare His absolution to the penitent; to the validity of which official acts, manifestly, the holiness or unholiness of the minister can add no weight, and interpose no bar; because in them His ministers are but the simple instruments for doing acts, to the doing of which acts He has appended His blessing for every faithful recipient of them. But this extends not to all their acts. For he uses His servants not merely as simple instruments for doing certain actions, but He employs also the powers of their minds and souls to affect the minds and souls of their brethren. This it is which makes them

dispensers of His Word. His Word is to be applied, enforced, explained, brought home to souls, by the intellectual and spiritual powers of His ministers, and through these powers of theirs He acts; so that their spiritual office reaches to this; it secures for its due holder, when duly exercised, the co-operation of the Holy Spirit with him in his work; and hence, of course, is all its efficiency and strength. For how could man's mind or spirit, without this marvellous gift, act upon the mind and spirit of another so as to quicken it towards God and leaven it with holiness? But there is this power in man's ministrations, because it is God's plan to work thus through men on others. So, manifestly, it has been ever since the Church of Christ was founded. The New Testament itself is mainly the result of such an acting, in its highest degree, of God on the minds and spirits of men, and through them on others. The Gospels indeed abound with the very words of Christ; but even the Gospels in large part, and the Epistles altogether, are the utterances of the souls of holy men under the strong afflatus of the Divine Spirit. And so we find the spiritual character of the man who is the instrument shaping, moulding, and throughout flavouring the revelation which we receive at his mouth. Hence the wonderful difference of the addresses which God's wisdom has given us from the mouths of St. John, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Paul; the revelation common, the truth one; but its application, its tone, its power of meeting the wants of different characters, its direct and immediate action with the fullest force on one and another, most eminently various. And that which we see thus most plainly in these, who were direct recipients of in-

spiration, and who were therefore the types of all inspiration, this is indeed repeated in its measure in every true minister of Jesus Christ; he, too, by his ordination, is made “a fellow-worker with God;” he, too, who by his baptism was brought for himself as a living soul into the midst of the mighty powers of the world to come, whereof we speak; he now, of God’s great goodness, in his ordination is made a channel whereby these spiritual blessings are to be conveyed to others. He is to be a stirrer-up of other souls; the breath of God’s awakening, convincing, converting, enlightening, purifying Spirit is now to breathe through him; the Spirit is to speak through him: though he has not, and needs not, any new revelation so far as concerns the great subject-matter of his doctrine, though that has from the first been written down for him in God’s Word, and since defined and explained in creeds and articles, and held in, and, as need has been, drawn forth afresh from, the living spiritual consciousness of Christ’s Church, yet from him it is to be reproduced as a new thing for others: the Holy Ghost will overshadow his spirit; and his spiritual life in its conflicts, hopes, fears and joys is to pour itself forth for others in appeal, doctrine, warning, comfort, and instruction. And as in a glass, face answers to face, so does the soul of the hearer find an answer to its own consciousness in the faithful minister of God’s Word. This is the teacher’s office in Christ’s Church: this is the fruit of the Lord’s ascension and the gifts of Pentecost,—“When He ascended up on high, He gave gifts unto men: and He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, pastors and teachers<sup>b</sup>:” this is the prophet’s office, this is the prophet’s

<sup>b</sup> Ephes. iv. 8, 11.

power—and remember, beloved brethren, this is the prophet's responsibility. For there is, indeed, this awful character about the office you are seeking. Prophets you too must be ; false prophets, or true ; prophets who quench and dumb the voice within you, and so who grow to prophesy deceit and lies ; or prophets of truth and righteousness, whom our Lord will own as such at the last. Has this ever occurred to you ? or have you thought, as it is but too evident that many do think, that in seeking the office of Christ's ministers they are but undertaking to perform certain acts, or, at the very best, are bound to certain intellectual exertions, and know nothing of being thus clothed in the rough garments of the prophet, and of sharing his risks ?

Yet in good truth how did that office in its most essential characters differ from ours ? By the prophet God spake to his brethren. Sometimes, indeed, it is manifest that the Divine afflatus took possession of the inspired man, and spoke by him as if his intellectual being and physical organs were a mere instrument for the utterance of that voice of God. But this was far from being always the case. There is the same difference between the prophecies of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Amos, and Isaiah, that there is between the writings of St. John, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, marking that there was then under the old dispensation the same colouring of the message by the earthly instruments, as we have already noticed in the case of inspired men within the Church of Christ. Now when the Divine afflatus took whole possession of the prophet, there seems to have been, so far as the utterance of his message was concerned, no room for unfaithfulness. Balaam, when that overruling breath of God fell upon him, prophesied as



truly as Isaiah; Saul was, as much as Samuel, amongst the prophets. The false prophet manifestly was detected in those other exercises of the prophetic office, wherein the human element mingled with the working of the enlightening Spirit. And it is further remarkable that the essence of the deceit of the false prophet does not appear to have lain in his directly conscious perversion of his message, but in an unconscious perversion, which deceived himself as well as others. It was not that, knowing the voice of God to say one thing, he deliberately uttered the opposite; but it was that he himself had come to a state in which, to his own internal consciousness, the true and the false were so confounded together, that he uttered the false not discerning it from the true. This is plain from a multitude of expressions in God's Word. It is said, that "when the day of God comes the prophets shall wonder<sup>c</sup>:" that they themselves, that is, shall be amazed at the failure of their predictions. Again, they are said to "prophecy a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart<sup>d</sup>;" "They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord<sup>e</sup>;" "They have seen vain and foolish things for thee<sup>f</sup>;" "They have seen a vain vision;" all implying that they did see, or think they saw, the falsehood which they uttered. And so again, we read, "They have spoken vanity," with the reason explicitly given, "because they have seen lies<sup>g</sup>." And there is yet one expression stronger still, for we read of a "prophet being deceived, and the Lord having deceived that prophet<sup>h</sup>."

<sup>c</sup> Jer. iv. 9.<sup>f</sup> Lam. ii. 14.<sup>d</sup> Ibid. xiv. 14.<sup>g</sup> Ezek. xiii. 7, 8.<sup>e</sup> Ibid. xxiii. 16.<sup>h</sup> Ibid. xiv. 9.



Now to what class of falsehoods in the false prophets does all this manifestly refer? surely not so much to a wilful and intentional perverting of truth, as to his becoming himself first the victim of the lie by which afterwards he misled others.

And if we seek to find how they themselves became thus deceived, we are not left long in doubt. They are charged by the true prophets with direct transgressions against what they did know to be God's will. Thus adultery, drunkenness, cruelty, and the love of gain are severally charged against them as the causes of their reaching this state of darkness. The prophetic power in them was thus turned into delusion, and became their destruction.

From more than one specially recorded instance we may perhaps trace this downward course.

With their spirits, as with Saul in his transgression, there would be first a diminishing, and then a withdrawal of the utterances formerly vouchsafed. The Lord would cease to answer by Urim or by Thummim, and the man in his distress would turn to other modes of eliciting the answer which he sought. He might trust to natural excitements, and come to mistake them for the heavenly guidance. He might, as Balaam seems to have done, have had recourse to incantations to quicken the lingering inspiration. Balaam's case, indeed, on the one side, and that of Jeremiah on the other, seem to put this truth in the strongest light. We can see Balaam's strong desire of gain warping his whole mind; and we can understand how, though for a season the Spirit of the Lord, for a special purpose, forced him into true prediction, yet that he was ready, even then, to fall under his

strong temptation. We see that he longed at the very time to say the opposite of that which, under the strong control of God's Spirit, he actually uttered. The voice of his own worldly desire sounds so loud, along with the very words of inspiration, that even whilst he was God's instrument for blessing Israel, we feel the man himself to be rather a soothsayer than a prophet; we expect to find the true voice die out of his soul, and the voice of lies and falsehood become, as we know it did, his only utterance.

In Jeremiah's case we see the directly opposite course: to him it was revealed as a direct message from God, that the King of Judah was to go forth from Jerusalem, and deliver himself up to his enemies. The declaration of this truth woke up against the prophet the bitterest hatred. Then all means of kindness and violence were successively used to induce him to tamper with or suppress his message. The vision does not seem to have been repeated; but he had once been charged with it. Here, then, was the exact case in which in the worldly-hearted man, lower motives of all kinds would have begun to work, until in time they might have overclouded the truth of God. But none of these things moved him: in the king's house, with the message of the princes, now threatening, and now enticing; with the denunciation of instant death ringing in his ears; and in the hungry depths of the miserable dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, his heart was alike firm: and so his prophetic spirit was kept clear and unflinching, and no lying vision ever cheated his soul.

Now, then, how plainly in all essential points was their case ours. A truth from God is conveyed to us as it

was to them. This truth is to form our message from God to our brethren. It makes no material difference whether that truth was conveyed to the prophets' mind by a direct illapse of the informing Spirit, as with them, or whether, as with us, it is learned through the teaching of the same Spirit from a written revelation. The prophet of old was tempted by earthly allurements, first, perhaps, to be silent when he ought to have spoken, and thus he might (as the old prophet who dwelt at Bethel seems to have done when he remained there in spite of Jeroboam's idolatry) make the voice of God utterly dumb within him; or he was tempted to swerve from strict and exact truth in delivering an unwelcome message; or, again, he might cloud his soul by allowed sin, or habitual softness and love of man's favour, so that in the dimness which spread over it he could not discern the lie from the truth: and as he yielded to this temptation he became a false prophet. He failed, that is, in his own moral and spiritual probation, and that failure led him to misuse his high gift, and involved him in the peculiar sin of being a false prophet. And if this be so, how exactly may we follow his course, and find ourselves at last in his condemnation. For we, in our day, have the same dangers to resist: sin and earthliness may dim our eye, so that it will become undiscerning of the heavenly light; the hindrances to our delivering simply our message may lead us to suppress or tamper with it until we become visionless and dumb, or grow to speak unawares altogether another message from that put by God into our mouths. And this fearful ruin may overtake us in the midst of what seems to be a harmless ordinary ministry. We start back, indeed, with horror at being

found to be false prophets, but, after all, what is easier, brethren, than such a fall? We enter, perhaps, upon our ministry with some real desire to bear the burden of God's message to our brethren. We begin at first to watch and pray, and study God's Word. We speak with some power. There is some stirring amongst our people. But we find that this declaration is unwelcome in this quarter, and that truth distasteful in another: and so we soften them down; or postpone urging them till some future time; and thus our voice grows uncertain and feeble, and no longer gives offence: perhaps we become popular with our people, are welcome at their tables, and are treated by them with respect; and suppose that all is going well with us. For there is nothing in this to arouse our suspicions. No great irregularity startles us. On the contrary, this temptation will specially beset those who are most regular in the discharge of their outward duties; for this regularity and external decorum in the discharge of our functions is even necessary to enable us thus to quiet the consciences of our people. They want to have a prophet dwelling amongst them. Their religious appetencies require such a gentle stimulus. Their fears would be roused if they thought that they had actually driven from them all God's witnesses. And so, just as the worst kings of Israel wanted and had many prophets at their court and table, so they want a prophet; only he must be one who will prophesy smooth things, and such as they choose to hear. Yet, after all, brethren, what is all this, which is indeed the true history of many a respected decent ministry, but the old story of the false prophets of Judah. How, in its lowering effects upon

the true spiritual character of a parish,—how, in its utterly dumbing effect upon the spiritual discernment and prophetic power of Christ's messenger, does it differ from that which of old awoke God's righteous indignation, so that He said, "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they strengthen the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all unto Me as Sodom<sup>1</sup>?"

Or take, for a moment, another case. A young man enters on his ministry with some lively sense of the greatness of that to which God's voice has called him. Some vision of his Master's Cross has been vouchsafed to him: he has groaned under the burden of indwelling sin, and he has himself found some deliverance at the foot of Calvary. The Spirit of God is breathing over him. He longs to bear this blessed message to every other sinner. He sees men sunk in sin and misery; he longs to tell them, 'God loveth you; God would save you. The Saviour yearns for your salvation; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?' In this spirit, perhaps, he enters on his ministry as a true prophet. What would he not do for his people? For the worst and vilest of them his Lord has shed His Blood; perforce the servant of that Lord must love them. Now from such an one, as he labours and prays, and lives on amidst the mysteries of God's Word, voices of God to all around him will be perpetually breaking forth. If he continued in this spirit, all his own growth in the spiritual life, his deeper humility, his keener eye for every sin within himself, his increasing tenderness, his wider knowledge of God's truth, all would, under the Spirit's influence,

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxiii. 14.



make his witness for God bolder, fuller; more appropriate to every altering circumstance around him, more searching, more convincing, more winning, more saving. He might be an Elijah standing before Ahab, or a Jeremiah weeping sore for Judah. But this early fervour does not last. His zeal is chilled by the cold professional decency and comfortable worldly maxims of some, perhaps, of his elder brethren in the ministry: or some temptation overcomes him. The flesh betrays him. By almost imperceptible steps his personal religion decays. Or vanity and self-seeking spring up. His secret prayers become few and cold. His interior communion with his Lord is interrupted; the work of the Spirit is stayed. He goes on outwardly, perhaps, as of old; nay, it may be that in mere outward observances he is stricter, or that in preaching, as the case may be, he is more excited, than heretofore. He clings desperately to these miserable remains of what was once a true work of God within him. But through all, he is but deceiving himself. For what is all this but the building of seven altars, but the slaying of the seven oxen and seven rams, and the seeking enchantments by one who ought, instead, to be full of the Spirit of the Lord? What is indeed the state of such an one but that of a false prophet, who finds now no vision from the Lord, in whose inmost soul the work of God has perished, and so in whom the power of prophecy has turned into a lie? What an ending, beloved brethren, of what a beginning! What would be the putting out of the sun's light compared with this darkness? What shall be the wakening up from such a sleep? How shall we who have preached to others endure to be cast away? Oh! in our hour of temptation,



when the flesh is strong, or the world alluring or self soliciting, oh for one sight of the Judge's face and the eternal doom! Oh for one sight of the Cross on Calvary, of the pierced hand, and of the wounded side! Oh for one keen throb of remembrance, How shall I look on Him whom I betrayed? How shall I, on whom His hand was laid, to whom His powers were granted, bear to hear from Him "Depart thou cursed?" How can I endure to find that there is for me "the yawning hell, the unquenchable flame, the dark prison, the undying worm, the bottomless chaos, the impassable wall, the unconsolable cry, with none to stand by me, none to plead for me, none to snatch me out<sup>k</sup>?"

Here, then, is the conclusion of the matter. By the essential nature of her constitution, the prophetic office whereby God's message is delivered to every soul survives in the Church of Christ. This is the fruit of the indwelling of God the Holy Ghost, of the promised presence of the Spirit of truth, convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. You are to be the organs by which that prophetic office is to be discharged: your living souls, your reasonable spirits are to be the recipients and transmitters of this work of the Holy Ghost. See, then, how great is your responsibility. Doubtless to us every woe denounced against false prophets may come personally home. Yea, and as the presence of the Holy One with us is closer, more abiding and more intimate than of old, so our guilt may be even more direct and fearful than was theirs.

And in what, then, is to be our safeguard? Doubtless in that which, with tender and loving prescience of

<sup>k</sup> Bishop Andrewes's Devotions, Meditation on the Day of Judgment.

our need, the Church sets here before us:—"Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and of the flesh?" Whilst we keep this threefold guard, we shall, through God's grace, be safe.

First, We must be diligent in prayer. Hither must be our first resort, because in this we fly to God. Surely, always, for all reasons, above all others, we have need to be men of prayer. For those over whose souls we are set to watch we need to pray always, because we shall prophesy in vain unless the Lord, the Spirit, open their ears; because on our knees we shall learn best to love them, and to watch for them; because from our knees we render them the truest aid. And for ourselves, what need have we to pray that for Christ's sake, and through His great love, our past and present sins, negligences, and ignorances may not grieve utterly the Spirit, and drive Him to leave our hearts to their own barrenness and blindness; that our souls may be so cleansed that we may love Him; that we may have the firmness, coolness, wisdom, insight, pity, love, tenderness, diligence, and care, all of which are so needed, and in such large measures, for the fitting discharge of our prophetic function!

Surely, beloved brethren, it is not in vain that the Church, by her rule for us her ministers, has so laboured to secure our being men of prayer: for all will wither without this, all will tend to growth and verdure if these refreshing dews are frequent and abundant. If we would keep quick and lively in our hearts the power of discerning and imparting truth, we must copy him in whom

the greatness and business of the court of the Chaldees could not dull the highest gifts of prophecy, because he set his "face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes<sup>1</sup>."

Secondly, to a life of prayer must be added a deep, constant study of God's Word for our own spiritual growth. It is not a superficial reading of it for the sake of others which will do. If we limit ourselves to this, we shall but defeat our own purpose; we shall grow shallow, self-repeating, and unreal. Our own souls must be continually bathed in those living streams if we would keep them apt and ready for heavenly visitations. Thus only will our ministry have that breadth and compass, and our doctrine that just harmony of several truths in their due proportions and relations, of which I have already spoken to you so fully. No substitute will do here. The very best books are separated by an impassable gulf from the Book of God. It is only by daily "reading and weighing of the Scriptures" under the "heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost" that we can "wax riper and stronger in our ministry;" it is only by studying God's Word for ourselves, and not merely to teach out of it, that our faculties for teaching can be in any measure perfected. On the great deep of Holy Scripture we float away from our prejudices and preconceptions, and afar from the creeping mists and rocky barriers of the narrowing coast, and, alone with God, can see in open vision the vastness of all His loving purposes. They who haunt these mighty tides "see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep."

But then, lastly, to this must be joined the "laying

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix. 3.

aside of the study of the world and of the flesh:" a hard work, indeed, for such as we are, and yet, above all things, necessary for him who would be a prophet of the Lord. For these carnal and worldly studies do of necessity dim the eye which should be purged to see God's truth, dull the ear which should hearken for His warning, and tie the tongue which should be ready to speak freely at His bidding. Even a Jew<sup>m</sup> could discern this great necessity, and declare, "Prophecy resideth not but in a man great in wisdom and virtue, whose affections overcome him not in any worldly things; but by his knowledge he overcometh his affections continually. On such a man the Holy Spirit cometh down, and his soul is associated to the angels, and he is 'changed to another man.' " Which passage another, who, if ever man did, knew by blessed experience the truth of that which he commends, quotes and thus enlarges: "We find that the prophets inquired and searched diligently" into what was directly revealed to them. "They studied, that is, to keep the passage open for the beams of those divine revelations to come in at; not to have their spirits clogged and stopped by earthly and sinful affections, endeavouring for that calm, and quiet, composed spirit in which the voice of God's Spirit might better be heard<sup>n</sup>."

Brethren, beloved in the Lord, strive earnestly to enter now on such a life. Let not even lawful things draw you down from it. Live in God's presence; meditate and pray beneath your Saviour's cross; bear with meek resolution your portion of His burden; pray and strive,

<sup>m</sup> Maimonides.

<sup>n</sup> Archbishop Leighton's Commentary on St. Peter, i. 10.

through the grace of the Holy Spirit, to lay aside as far as possible the ever pressing, soiling studies of the world and of the flesh. It will be a life of labour, toil, and self-denying watchfulness. But it will have its compensations even here. God's presence will be round you. The pierced hand will be held out above you, the communion of the Holy Ghost will dwell with you. Though a toilsome life, its toil will be soon ended. "Behold," is His perpetual message, "Behold, I come quickly." And what will not that coming be to every faithful servant? The end of waiting, and toiling, and sorrow, the everlasting presence of all joy. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne°."

° Rev. iii. 21.

## Diligence in Study.

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“WILL YOU BE DILIGENT IN . . . . SUCH STUDIES AS HELP TO THE  
KNOWLEDGE OF THE SAME?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*





## ADDRESS X.

### DILIGENCE IN STUDY.

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I HAVE spoken already on an occasion like the present of the need and of the blessing of a deep study of the Holy Scriptures to all those who seek the ministry of our Church. But the question wisely put to you in our Ordinal reaches farther than to an acquaintance however accurate with Holy Scripture itself. You pledge yourself also to "such studies as may help to the knowledge of the same."

Now, in weighing this engagement, it is clear that it pledges you to be, during the whole course of your ministry, students of theology; and it is, depend upon it, of great moment that you should be so, for the sake both of what such studies prevent and of what they furnish. They prevent our sinking into a life of idleness; and idleness, I need scarcely remind you, is the fruitful parent of almost every other fault. For from it are bred not only the habits of frivolity which make a life purposeless as to ourselves and fruitless as to others, nor only those worldly compliances, and that indulgence in dissipating amusements, to which men have recourse to fill up vacant time; nor only, beyond these, habits of gossiping and tattling, which can hardly long be free from direct sin; but even beyond all these, those deadly lusts in which every now and then an unwatchful min-

istry is drowned, and some miserable man destroyed. It was when, contrary to his wonted custom, King David remained at home at "the time when kings go forth to battle," though the army of Israel was encamped in the field, that the ready tempter betrayed him to his shameful fall.

But even if idleness reach not to these marked measures of evil, it has a very palsyng influence upon a ministry. It leads to habits of softness and self-sparing, which soon infect the whole character, which are fatal to a high tone of devotion, and often end in the prevalence of cowardly and ungenerous actions.

Against all these evils a life of Christian study is a great and blessed safeguard; and a safeguard which we need. For we must not blink the fact that, for many reasons, idleness is quite sure to prove one of our besetting temptations. Irregularly, almost capriciously, as the charges of population are allotted to our parishes, there must always be a large proportion of our clergy to whom their parishes will not supply sufficient occupation to keep them really and wholesomely diligent. And though that daily saying of the prayers which the rubric prescribes to us<sup>a</sup> would do not a little, if conscientiously practised, to maintain the spiritual vigour of such ministries, yet not only is this most blessed duty too generally neglected, but further, it is for the most part most neglected where there is the least time found for any regular theological study.

<sup>a</sup> "All priests and deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer either privately or openly, not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause."—*Rubric "Concerning the Service of the Church," Book of Common Prayer.*

Idleness, too, must be a besetting temptation to us, not only when the parish which forms our charge is very small, but from the very nature of our duties. For these are necessarily uncertain and undefined. They are not exacted from us as a tale which we render to another, but are a burden which it is left to us to lay, at our own discretion, on ourselves. They may for the most part be discharged as well at one hour of the day as at another, to-morrow as to-day, and a very little experience of life will teach us that these are exactly the engagements which it is most easy to postpone without self-condemnation, and most difficult to discharge with any really exact regularity. Every eye can see when the arrow which is aimed at a single point misses its mark, but hardly any gaze can tell in the wavering flight of the butterfly whether it has visited or missed this flower or that of the many amongst which it hovers.

Whatever, then, tends to give aim, purpose, and habits of regular industry to our lives, is of itself a special blessing, as a safeguard against a certain and besetting temptation. But it is far from being only for the sake of this negative and incidental advantage that I would earnestly press upon you the duty of forming early in your ministry, and stedfastly maintaining throughout its whole course, real habits of theological study. Depend upon it, you cannot with full efficiency perform the work God has set you to do without such habits. Even if your whole ministry is to be spent amongst a few unlettered people, you cannot "make full proof" of it unless you are evermore a student. The mind which is not thus enriched will very soon become sterile. You will, unawares, be per-

petually producing from it the same crop, and evermore with a feebler growth; you will become a mere self-repeater; your ministry will grind on, in a single groove, on a track of the dullest uniformity. Your people may be too unlettered to reason upon the causes of this barrenness in their teacher, but they will feel it; and its impression will most assuredly be marked in their feeble, irretentive perception of the mighty truths which your drowsy monotone has made so dull and commonplace to them. This at the least;—for the effect of your idleness and lack of study may indeed be far more startling than this. If you are placed in charge of men with more active minds, they will in time, through sheer weariness, abandon your ministrations, sometimes absenting themselves altogether from public worship, sometimes wandering to schismatical teachers, because they cannot endure your emptiness. For emptiness must be the result of idleness. If you are an idle man, and have the perilous gift of a commonplace facility of utterance, the connexion between idleness and emptiness is almost instant. And even if you have higher gifts, imagination and something of eloquence, the result will soon be the same. For you cannot know theology without painfully acquiring the knowledge. It is a very wide and a very intricate subject. It abounds in the nice distinctions by which truth may easily shade off into error; and in ignorantly following your own imagination amongst these, you are sure either to be generally faint and unimpressive in all that you say, or, if you have more vigour of intellect, are very likely to become, unawares, a heretic or an heresiarch.

All this is perfectly compatible with the great truth

that your flock, of whomsoever it may be composed, needs to have set before it, not refinements and intricacies, but the Gospel of Christ in its simplicity. For of this, as of every other great subject, it is true, that it is not ignorance but complete knowledge which will enable you to be simple. There is, indeed, a simplicity which belongs to absolute and complete ignorance,—the simplicity of a fearless exaggerated mode of stating truths which, to be stated aright, need carefulness and a well-balanced accuracy. From this shameless audacity of ignorance most, if not all of you, would no doubt be free; but it may well happen that your sense of the danger of error may only make you feebly obscure. For nothing is more misty than half-knowledge. If you know enough to know the danger of mistaking some doctrinal truth, but do not know enough to be able and so to dare to state it in all its proportions, with its guards and its correlatives, you will be tempted to wrap it up in ambiguities which may save you by their uncertainty from the possibility of being detected in error.

Nor is this all: for though it is bad enough thus to weaken and obscure all your statements, yet in the present day it is too probable that an ignorant ministry may lead you into yet deeper ruin. For this is not an age when it is very easy for any clergyman to sink easily and comfortably into stagnation. The winds of controversy and of speculation are too high, and they blow too directly upon us, to let the dull calm of many a clerical life of the last generation be ours. Everything is being called in question. The cardinal doctrines of the faith are first admitted without a question, and



then explained away without a scruple : the atonement wrought out for us by the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the inspiration of Holy Scripture, the grace of sacraments, the whole objective truth of everything in the Church around us, is doubted, or questioned, or undermined, or reduced to the most natural proportions ; whilst on the other side, encouraged by this very licence, worn-out papal superstitions are fresh furbished up, and walk about through the twilight hours perverting by their false professions of certainty unstable souls which have felt the misery of doubting everything, and enticing them into the darkened habitations of error as the only safe abodes of rest and quietness. In this state of men's minds old heresies are springing up again under new names ; and unless we are really well taught in the history of those earlier times, not in the mere dry skeleton knowledge of events which may be picked up from well-arranged abridgements, but by our having as it were dwelt in the company, and breathed the atmosphere, and shared the fears and hopes and struggles of those who lived and died to maintain these old truths, we shall be quite unable to save others from the dangers of the times, and shall too often fall into them ourselves. If such should ever become the general character of our clergy, the days of our Church's usefulness, if not of its existence, are numbered. In the present activity of men's minds an idly ignorant clergy would soon be despised, and, being despised, would not long be tolerated. Nor would the ministry of our own Church alone suffer. All the religious communities around her, even those which at first sight seem to be the most opposed to her, would suffer and

languish with her; for she does indeed retain for them, as well as for herself, the knowledge of the truth. Forth from her battlements have at all times gone out to battle in days of danger many doughty champions, who have won not only for herself, but for those who dwell in the tents of the wilderness around her, deliverance from the Moabitish bands and the swords of the children of Anak. This seems to me, at this moment, a matter for most serious and anxious thought. Many circumstances combine to make this our danger. The great call for preachers and sermons, and that especially for preachers and sermons for the religiously uninstructed; the shorter time given in every subject, and certainly not least in theology, to preparation and attainment, all this tends to introduce amongst us an early, ill-ripened, and so a feeble maturity.

The dread of extreme views works most fallaciously and most mischievously in the same direction: most fallaciously, because extreme views, instead of being the product of deep learning, are in common snatched suddenly up from a superficial acquaintance with unfathomed truths, and so are the natural produce of ignorance in a time of excitement; most mischievously, because under its influence the gradually leavening power of public opinion, and the patronage which it directs, tends to the undervaluing of learning, and the setting giddy ignorance upon heights very dangerous to its heady self-sufficiency. It is, then, eminently a time when every candidate for Holy Orders needs specially to be reminded of this question in the Ordinal, "Will you be diligent in such studies as help to the knowledge of Holy Scripture?" and of your answer,

“I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper.”

There is a wide range of most wholesome learning over which such studies should lead you. First, of course, and before all things, there is the letter of Holy Scripture itself; and, if possible, in its original tongues. Then there is a store of the best critical, exegetical, and spiritual commentary and annotation on it which you should make your own. Well nigh if not altogether first amongst these would I put the *Gnomon Bengelii*; for it is to the original I would refer you. Worthy of being mentioned beside this are the two volumes of the present Dean of Westminster on the miracles and parables of our Lord; whilst in Dr. Wordsworth's Greek Testament you will find not only a complete and scholarlike commentary, but also easy and abundant references to the treasures of our great divines on all the great subjects which he more briefly handles.

Beyond these how vast are the pastures of theological study! There are all the stores of casuistical, of moral, spiritual and devotional instruction, spread through volumes large enough to stock the largest library. Then, too, there is ecclesiastical history in all its various branches, without knowing which you can never be a divine at all; can never understand even the terms you daily use, or enter into their specific value, or understand the heart-searching controversies and mighty tides of recovered truth of which they are the fruit and permanent result. How, then, can you most profitably address yourself to this study? You will find, I think, special advantages from doing so in two distinct ways.

First, begin to write one sermon, at least, carefully, and upon various subjects, at the beginning of every week. The course of the Christian year, and the passages of Scripture appointed for the Gospels and Epistles will naturally lead you over the whole field of sacred truth. Never shirk a subject. As you write, look carefully over your statements. Be sure of their correctness. If you doubt any of them, do not water them down to mean anything or nothing; do not omit them; do not pass them over; but stop in your writing and follow the matter out. If it is a matter of doctrinal accuracy, take down your "Pearson on the Creed" and hunt it out there: weigh his text, search his notes, and then adhere to, or qualify, or strengthen your statement. This will take time, but the result of it will be a firmness and clearness of view and of statement which will abundantly repay the labour.

But besides this, have some regular fixed hours every day for direct reading and study; lay out your days so as to secure this, and be careful in selecting as the subjects of this study really sterling and solid matter. It is a miserable mistake to take your opinions from reviews, and newspapers, and other men's reproductions of great authors: go to the originals and master them for yourselves.

In doing this, begin with the rich stores of theology which you possess in this English Church. There is a tone of theology which is truly English, and it is no light matter to form the character of your own mind on that of the great writers of our own mother Church before you go elsewhere. I have already mentioned Bishop Pearson's great work, which is itself a perfect library of

divinity. Next to it I should rank Hooker, and his profound and most instructive examination of the whole Ecclesiastical Polity of the Church, grounding that polity, as he profoundly does, on the great corner-stones of Christian doctrine. Next to Hooker I should place Barrow; a writer who for soundness of doctrine, for breadth of view, for the complete exhaustion of his subject, for mastery of the English tongue in its copiousness and in its vigour, stands almost unrivalled.

In another and a most important department of study, that true Christian casuistry which at once awakens and informs the conscience, you will find the study of Sanderson invaluable. With him, lest even his manly casuistry should ever prove entangling to you, read over and over the Sermons and the Analogy of Butler, the grand calmness of whose mighty speculations will open to the utmost all your reasonable faculties, and the breadth of whose principles and judgments will keep you, whilst you study casuistry, from becoming, in the evil sense of that word, a casuist. With your mind thus braced up and stored, you may turn to the inexhaustible variety of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and feed your fancy and enrich your imagery, whilst you elevate the tone of your devotion, in his eloquent pages.

And now you may venture to approach the deep Christian learning of Bishop Andrewes; and from him may go on to marvel at the unrivalled skill and wonderful command of language with which South uses in the cause of truth the sharpest weapons of the keenest wit.

When you have thus saturated your mind with English theology, I would send you first to a new and more careful study of the *Patres Apostolici*, and of such of



the Fathers as you can obtain and master. First amongst whom, for your practical profit, I should place the great Augustine, in whose Confessions, Epistles, and Sermons you will find an endless store of the most stirring and exalting teaching. Where the whole of these great works are beyond your reach, you may often obtain single treatises, which let you into the company and thoughts of those mighty men, who embodied in themselves the teaching of the earlier Church. Such are the Confessions and Epistles of St. Augustine, and the *Cur Deus Homo* of St. Anselm; which last work I would advise you to read over every Christmas-tide.

Turning to ecclesiastical history, I will only name to you three works as being within the reach of all, and as full of wholesome instruction. The History of Robertson, with which you are, I hope, all more or less familiar; and that of Geiseler, the text of which is often to be received with caution, but the notes of which embody the fairest and most complete quotations, and so supply you with unlimited materials for weaving for yourselves the web and woof of the Church's history. To this I must add Bingham's "Christian Antiquities," an invaluable storehouse of the most important knowledge of the best generations.

I have given you but a sketch; for I do not profess to give you a list of books which would make you masters in theology, but only one with which every ordinary English clergyman can and ought to make himself familiar.

And now, brethren, the time warns me to have done. Only, before I close, let me remind you of the one great purpose, which is to exalt and sanctify this study. All



these works I have enumerated are valuable, because, duly employed, they may "help you in the knowledge of Holy Scripture;" in the knowledge, that is, of God's great written revelation of Himself to man, of that which can "make you wise unto salvation." Yea, my brethren in Christ, it is to this end that all your studies must be turned, or all will be in vain. Carried on for low, or selfish, or earthly purposes, much study is but much weariness, and great learning great vanity. Still I would remind you that this is not the danger of the day, and therefore most probably it is not your danger. Levity, idleness, indolence, a mere superficial acquaintance with many things, much talk, and little deep thought or patient research, these are the characteristics of the day, and they are not good symptoms of the present nor charged with blessings for the future. May God help each one of us to do something to amend them; to secure our having a godly, a devout, and a learned clergy; men who shall have acquired the first master lessons of holy living beneath the Cross of Christ, and then gone on to consecrate all the attainments of the loftiest and most instructed intellect by using them, with the fervour of love, to preach in their uttermost simplicity the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of Christ.

# Being an Example to the Flock of Christ.

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“WILL YOU BE DILIGENT TO FRAME AND FASHION YOUR OWN SELVES,  
AND YOUR FAMILIES, ACCORDING TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST;  
AND TO MAKE BOTH YOURSELVES AND THEM, AS MUCH AS IN YOU  
LIETH, WHOLESOME EXAMPLES AND PATTERNS TO THE FLOCK OF  
CHRIST?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*



## ADDRESS XI.

BEING ENSAMPLES TO THE FLOCK OF CHRIST.

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THE question which follows in our Ordinal that which we last considered, is equally addressed to the candidates for the orders of deacons or of priests. It is this: "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?"

This question borders closely on that which precedes it. For the answer to this will bind you to a life framed and fashioned according to the teaching of our Lord, whilst the other leads you to pledge yourselves to a life which should be marked by prayer, by the constant reading and weighing of the Word of God, and by abstinence from the study of the world and of the flesh: and these are the very conditions of a life of holiness; conditions so essential that it cannot exist without them, and so certain in their operation that it must, through God's mercy, grow out of their daily exercise. Here, then, these two questions seem to run into each other; yet there is a distinction to be traced between them. The former question pointed especially to the interior springs of the new life; this, to its external body and manifestation. That addressed itself to the inward life of devotion to be nourished and maintained by secret prayer

and hidden communings with God ; this, to that life of watchfulness, and resistance of temptation, and holy obedience, and high-souled purity which God's servant must lead, even before the eyes of men, in his day of outward trial and visible conflict with evil. And so this question passes from yourself to others, asking you not only whether you will diligently labour to maintain communion with God in your own soul, but also whether you will let your light shine before men, making your life, and the life of your family, an example and a pattern to the flock of Christ.

On this side, then, the enquiry leads us into some new and most important matters. It sets before us this great truth, that the conduct which we and those closest to us exhibit before the eyes of men becomes a pattern for them to follow ; that this must be so ; that from the nature of the case it is inevitable : that whether for good or for evil, the lives of ourselves and of those round us must be so mixed up in men's esteem with our doctrine, as to be taken by them to be exponents of it ; and so that our life must have an effect on others, either lifting them up by our example to a likeness to Christ, or drawing them down by our unworthy living to a wider distance from Him. This, indeed, in its measure, is the necessary law under which all of us spend our lives upon earth. As the light and heat by which life, and beauty, and increase are maintained in this world, stream always noiselessly, yea, and imperceptibly, from that mighty luminary which God has set in the heavens to rule the day, so is there ever flowing forth from every true Christian man an animating and pervading influence of good, which affects all others who come within

the sphere of its action. "Ye are the light of the world." Every earnest, devout, humble, truthful, self-denying man is thus daily penetrating others with the brightness of his own life; and in this way, probably, he is doing far more good than even by his more direct attempts by conversation or by action to benefit others. For this influence is unceasing, whereas his direct and conscious efforts must be numbered. Against these last, moreover, men harden themselves; they have time and notice to resent and to reject the interference: but the secret influences of a holy life steal upon them as the early dews of morning, or the fragrance of incense coming they know not whence, and seizing upon the open sense before it has time to close itself against them. Such a man moves about amongst his fellows with an unconscious influence for good, which, like "the very shadow of St. Peter," heals some of those he passes by. And as it is with good men, so is it with the evil. As in some fearful stages of malignant fever men bear about them an atmosphere of pestilence which, without their design or privity, imparts itself by a secret approach to the receptive faculties of others, so is the selfish, or lewd, or careless, or ungodly, or indevout man an ever-present centre of destructive influences. Even when he least desires it, he is poisoning the moral atmosphere around him. Men who would reject his whisper are imbibing unconsciously the taint of his example. Like those miserable beings in fable, who are doomed to bring all who love them to destruction, such men infallibly draw down, by the pestilent contagion of their life, those around them, even when they would fain set no bad example. As the serpent in the Eastern tale destroyed unawares the child it loved



by the intenseness of its venom, so do evil men, even when they strive most to be innocent, as, for instance, in the presence of their children, shed a deadly influence of debased instincts, looks, and words unknowingly around them.

All this, which is true of every man, is most true of those who would be teachers of others. Such men have no privacy. Their life is ever teaching one way or the other, far more eloquently than their direct words or formal exhortations. Even a heathen philosopher could say,—“*Longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla*.”

But this must be more specially true with us, from the very nature and constitution of our office. It follows necessarily from that appointment of our Lord which has committed the great work of converting and building up souls to a living human ministry. His word indeed is “the sword of the Spirit;” but it is to be wielded by the hands of His servants, and we are those servants. His message is sent not by angels, but by men; by those who share in every respect the nature, infirmities, temptations, sins and supports of those to whom they speak for God. And God works through this unity of nature between those to whom He sends His message, and those whom He employs as His messengers. He reproduces His work in others from those in whom He has wrought it Himself, and whom He is using as His fellow-labourers.

So it has been from the foundation of this ministry. The apostles of the Lord first imbibed this life themselves, and then, in the power of His grace, imparted it

\* Seneca.

to others. And so it is ever to be. "The Husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits<sup>b</sup>." So our blessed Lord taught us that it must be, when He spake of Himself, the Great Exemplar, as the Good Shepherd who, "when He putteth forth His own sheep, goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him<sup>c</sup>." And this, no doubt, was one principal reason for the order of those repeated exhortations of St. Paul:—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers<sup>d</sup>;" "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine. Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly unto them; that thy profiting may appear to all<sup>e</sup>." And what he thus enjoined on others he, for the same reason, practised diligently himself. For he could say to his Ephesian converts, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations<sup>f</sup>." And again, to the flock at Thessalonica he could say, "Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail. . . Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves amongst you that believe<sup>g</sup>." Who can doubt but that the rhetoric of this eloquent life was one of the very chiefest means whereby, through the blessing of God on his ministry, souls were won to Christ. What without that would have been his persuasive tongue, or even his power of working miracles? As it was with him, so it must be with us. Men are still won, through God's grace, to Christ, by their bre-

<sup>b</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 6.<sup>c</sup> John x. 4.<sup>d</sup> Acts xx. 28.<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 16. 15.<sup>f</sup> Acts xx. 18, 19.<sup>g</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 10.

thren who have found Him for themselves. It is now, as it was of old in Galilee, when Andrew, through the teaching of John Baptist, had followed Christ. "He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus <sup>h</sup>."

We, if we would succeed in our ministry, must enter on it as our own George Herbert did on his, determining "above all" to be "sure to live well, because the virtuous life of a clergyman is the most powerful eloquence to persuade all that see it to reverence and love, and, at least, to desire to live like him. And this," he resolves, "I will do, because I know we live in an age that hath more need of good examples than precepts . . . And I beseech God," he adds, "that my humble and charitable life may so win upon others as to bring glory to my Jesus, whom I have this day (of my induction) taken to be my Master and Governor <sup>i</sup>."

But it is not only the constitution of the Christian ministry, but also the nature of those amongst whom we minister, which makes our example so effectual for good or for evil. To see this more clearly, let us endeavour to trace out what must be the effect upon our people, I do not say of a bad example in us, but of a life which falls in any respects below our ministerial teaching.

First, then, see how it must affect the evil livers in our parishes. To prove the faith of Christ to be a cunningly devised fable is the interest of every man who is living in sin; for that faith condemns and threatens him, and he has a voice within himself which, in

<sup>h</sup> John i. 41, 42.

<sup>i</sup> Walton's *Lives*, p. 359, 4to.

spite of all his efforts to drown it, continually repeats, and points against himself its denunciations. Now what argument against Christianity can be comparable in force to this, that they who teach it manifestly disbelieve their own doctrine? What, therefore, can more help such an unhappy man in his work of self-destruction than our inconsistencies? For whatever we may think, such an one is sharp-sighted to detect them, and from them he gathers readily that our sermons and our teaching are nothing better than professional declarations, the hollowness of which we feel secretly, and therefore manifest in our lives.

The same effect, too, in its own degree, is produced on others also by a careless ministerial life. It must certainly harden in sin that large number in every parish who entertain no doubts about the truths of Christianity, but are ever trying to combine enough of it to quiet their consciences with an earthly, irreligious life. For if at any time our words awaken apprehension or thought about their souls in the minds of such, the sight of our own life quiets them again. They always expect rather more of us than they think themselves bound to render; and if the spot of allowed worldliness or irreligion appears in our life, they can readily excuse its stain in theirs.

Again; such a life in us, whilst it furnishes arguments against the truth of our holy faith to those who wish to disbelieve it, and a positive excuse for sin to irreligious men, acts fearfully in keeping back those who are striving to serve God. For they are, of course, daily surrounded by temptation. Their natural infirmity exposes them to the danger of allowing themselves freely

in acts or indulgences which are not positively wrong, but which are inexpedient, and so are hurtful to the soul, and our conduct, if it errs on the side of licence, almost certainly decides theirs. Thus self-indulgence in us keeps them positively back; we help them to fall down to, or to form, or to keep a low and uncertain standard of obedience, faith, love, and victory over the world.

This danger, moreover, is increased both for ourselves and for our flock by the fact that, so far from such a life alarming our people or repelling them from us, it will frequently minister rather to our immediate popularity. Open iniquity in us would shock and disgust them. If we yielded to gross sins, we should forfeit the character of spiritual guides; we should be no pattern at all: we might harden the infidel, but we could hardly mislead or depress the feeble but struggling Christian. But if we are respectable enough to serve as a pattern, and yet sufficiently worldly to be an easy pattern, we may almost certainly secure a great amount of general favour. For the world loves that easy and respectable worldliness in us, which, so far from stirring consciences and awaking souls, makes it more easy for its votaries to veil over the sharper and severer truth of Christian faith, and to combine a decently religious appearance with an inveterate and absorbing love of the things of this present time. So far, indeed, may this be carried, that a man may preach to the most worldly-minded congregation almost any amount of Christian truth without stirring up any opposition from them, if only he will let his life exhibit the union of this theoretical excellence with their own merely decent commonplace



behaviour. For our life excuses their lives; and they will gladly let us preach as we like, if we will let them live as they like. Whilst such a life in us does more than let them so live, it positively helps them in their evil course. Our example stands between them and the thunders of God's Word, which must sometimes reach their souls; it saves them from those occasional starts to which the lives of the most easy are from time to time exposed.

We may, perhaps, see this most clearly if we look at it in one or two details. Let us, then, suppose that we have in our parish some of those many families in which a certain regard for religion is combined with an easy, luxurious life of self-indulgence, or of display, or with the continual accumulation of increased and undistributed riches. Now, if we preached honestly and truly against such a selfish and unchristian abuse of God's gifts, and added to our sermons the example of large charity, frequent self-denial, and the joyful abandonment of superfluous luxuries, in order that we might with our substance promote the cause of God, we should, no doubt, be thought fanatical, and classed amongst some of those inconvenient over-religionists for which every age and generation has its own names of reproach. But if, though we preach precisely the same words, we live as they do, and shew in our conversation and behaviour in society that, whilst in the reading-desk and pulpit we hold a high professional tone, we are in our life just what they are, inasmuch as that life of ours which ought to be their reproof is turned into a soothing assimilation to their conduct, we shall, instead of bearing Christ's rebuke, be almost certainly encouraged and caressed.



Thus a free line on our part as to those amusements of the world, or those sports and pastimes which, though not actually wrong, are yet manifestly unsuitable to our office, becomes a ready excuse for an unspiritual, and even—as men always take on the side of indulgence more than is given to them—for a decidedly sinful life in others.

Take, again, another example from a different class of subjects.

The habits and manner of the pastor may be traced in the long run markedly repeating themselves in the whole devotional tone of a parish. If, whilst we are ministering in the congregation, we have a careless and irreverent manner, if we drawl out the service with a languid affectation, or if we hurry it rapidly over as if we were mainly anxious to complete a certain fixed amount of recited offices, we shall surely form amongst our people habits of the like languid inattention or hasty irreverence.

This, again, had not escaped the notice of George Herbert; and as, perhaps, there never was a time when there was more need of reminding men of his words upon this subject, I will give them to you here. His pastor, then, “when he is to read divine offices, composeth himself to all possible reverence, lifting up his hands, and heart, and eyes, with all the gestures of a hearty and unfeigned devotion. And this he does, first, as being truly touched and amazed with the majesty of God. before whom he presents himself; and secondly, that being affected himself, he may affect also his people, knowing that no sermon moves them so much to reverence as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying.

Accordingly his voice is humble, his words treatable and slow ; yet not so slow neither, as to let the fervency of the suppliant hang and die between speaking, but with a grave liveliness between fear and zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performs his duty<sup>k</sup>."

The principle which I have sought to illustrate in these details may easily be transposed to all parts of the Christian life. In all, alas ! it is alike true that the infirmity of our fallen nature leads us to seize readily upon any excuse for low attainments and an easy, self-indulgent practice ; as to all, it is certain that few excuses are more readily adopted than the easy pattern set before us in the life of a decent but unspiritual pastor.

All that I have said hitherto applies, as you will see, to the direct effect of our example in raising or lowering the tone of holy living around us. But there is an entirely different set of dangers connected with the duty of our being ensamples to the flock, as to which I must say a few words to you. It is not only, then, by setting a low standard before others that you may fail of being, as you ought to be, living copies, in your several spheres, of the great Exemplar, but that you may, by want of wisdom and by degrees of self-indulgence, far less marked than those which I have glanced at, endanger or destroy wholly the influence of what is, on the whole, a good life. We all of us, I suppose, know instances in which mere eccentricities of manners have sufficed to destroy the moral weight and influence in society around him of some man of acknowledged power and goodness. Now this should lead us to watch ourselves closely, lest through indo-

<sup>k</sup> Country Parson, chap. vi.

lence, or carelessness, or indulged mannerism, any of the little infirmities or blemishes in behaviour which destroy men's influence should grow upon us. We must often bring our mere deportment in society under review, if in this matter we would be blameless.

This will apply, of course, to such matters as the allowance of spirits which, perhaps, flow with a high tide of reaction after hard work or long repression, and which, though perfectly innocent in themselves, may appear to others inconsistent with the higher tone of the ministerial life, and so may blight its power of influencing others. A holy, self-restrained, cheerful deportment, without the painful presence of a mask-like, assumed gravity, is that at which we should aim, and for which we should pray. Even beyond this, too, there is much as to which we should be careful. Slovenly habits at meals, inattention to neatness and perfect cleanliness in dress, a careless neglect of the true delicacy which marks good society, want of sympathy with those in whose company we are, idleness as to joining modestly in cheerful and rational conversation. All of these things will seem important to one who is indeed watching himself carefully lest in his person "in anything the ministry" should "be blamed," and his own power of witnessing for Christ be lessened.

Far beyond this, again, there is a yet more subtle form of self-indulgence against which we must be upon our guard. If personal habits which bespeak carelessness or ill-breeding may thus destroy our influence, far more may any which suggest to our people, it matters not with how little foundation, the suspicion of yet deeper evils. Now we live at a time when the

miserable defection of many members of our body from our own reformed Church, and their deadly fall into the corruptions of the debased communion of the Papacy, have necessarily awakened a suspicious habit of mind amongst our people as to any tendency in their spiritual guides to this fearful apostacy. It is the character of such suspicions to be vague, unreasoning, and often most unjust. They may attach themselves to us from some mere accident, or from our resolving to abandon no truth because it is unpopular, or from our honestly and honourably refusing to persecute others from whom we ourselves differ, but to whom we will not be unjust. When these suspicions are thus awakened, deeply as we must lament them, we cannot blame ourselves for their existence. We must maintain truth at any price: we must not be unjust to others,—even to weak and foolish men,—in order to purchase for ourselves immunity from damaging suspicions. Such trials we may indeed take as persecutions for righteousness' sake, and humbly hope that our Master's "Happy are ye" may reach to us; and that these seeming evils shall in the end, through His grace, turn out rather to the furtherance of His Gospel. But these suspicions often arise from a widely different source: and as to such, those on whom they fix are by no means the guiltless victims. If, for example, the wearing a particular dress, the addiction to unusual forms or modes of conduct in or out of our churches, will almost certainly arouse such suspicions, how can we be blameless, if, because they are more suitable to our own feelings, we adopt them, and so place stumbling-blocks in the way of weak brethren for whom Christ died? I will not enlarge upon this head.

A mere hint will suffice to suggest to you all that I would say. But let no man suppose that his conduct as to such matters can be trivial. The common impassive eye of society is caught far more readily by such external badges than by the far deeper realities of doctrine. Many a man who might, without raising one suspicion, have won a parish by a holy example and sound teaching to the true tone of our reformed Church, has marred all his usefulness and destroyed all his influence by the suspicions which his dress or his manners have most needlessly but inevitably awakened. Nor is this suspicious habit, most injurious as, alas! it is, either wholly unreasonable in itself, or wholly misplaced in attaching itself to these external indications of a supposed inward unsoundness. The colours and devices of the army's banners do but indicate to the eyes of all to which side it appertains, and men will naturally think that, except as signs and badges of a party, such trifles could not seem important in the eyes of men set to deal with the salvation of souls and the issues of eternity.

As to these matters, then, as deeply affecting your power of influencing others by your good examples, I earnestly entreat you, my brethren, to seek as in God's sight to be found blameless.

All this, moreover, which applies so forcibly to the effect of our own lives on others, belongs also in no small degree to the lives of our families. For what a man really is himself underneath the veil of professional formalities, is often most openly declared by what those are who stand nearest to him. And even where this is not so, the pastor's usefulness is fearfully marred, be he



himself what he may, if the pattern of his family be of this world, and not of that which is to come. Surely, then, the ordination pledge must bind us so to choose the partners of our family life, and to seek so to rule our families, as that in all things God may be glorified in them as well as in ourselves.

For to set an evil example here is no slight guilt. Nothing under the old dispensation awoke more loudly the thunders of God's denunciations than when His prophets, from their love of money, or ease, or other worldly indulgences, led His people into sin. It was the guilt, and it became the condemnation, of Eli's miserable sons,—“Ye make the Lord's people to transgress.” And doubtless this is still a fearful sin when tried by the laws of that spiritual kingdom which knows not time or change. What an account, my brethren, must be rendered at the last day by the careless pastor, whose worldly, unspiritual example has been continually drawing down to hell souls for which Christ died, and which He committed to the charge of this unfaithful guide. Surely we can see that in that awful hour it had been better for him that a millstone had been hanged about his neck, and that he had been cast into the sea, than that he should have thus made these little ones to fall. How widely spread, moreover, and withal how unsuspected, may be such an evil influence. Who can tell, until that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that he is altogether free from this guilt. Who may not by some self-indulgence, some unmortified temper, some doubtful habit, be lowering the tone of spirits which he was set to raise, and clogging with earthly incumbrances souls which he ought to



have borne up with himself on the wings of faith to the brightness of the beatific vision.

Surely the mere possibility of such a danger should lead us to a closer watchfulness and a more practical self-suspicion. Surely it should lead us to see how all our ministry, from first to last, needs evermore to be sprinkled with the blood of atonement, lest it condemn us utterly. Surely it should shew us the great peril of this our undertaking, the risk to ourselves and others which must attend our venturing upon a charge which too many carelessly assume without one thought of holy dread. Surely it should lead us to seek diligently to see how we may most safely fulfil these solemn and enduring engagements.

This question I will now, in conclusion, examine with you as to this special promise.

First, then, I would say, let it be our habitual care to be at all times setting the example we have promised. Let there be no intervals of conscious self-allowance, no earthly parentheses in our ministerial life. Let us remember that always we are the messengers of Christ; that all our life, and every part of it, is embraced in the wide-spreading engagements of the Christian ministry. For always we shall have watchful eyes fixed upon us: and one passionate exclamation, one covetous device, one scheming, or vainglorious, or unjust, or harsh action may cast a blighting glare of hypocrisy over the most zealous services in the more direct work of our ministry.

This first; and then next, in order to keep up this continual watch, let us often pause and remind ourselves of the risk which we are herein running. Let us break through that crust of professional decency which forms

so rapidly around us, and ask ourselves, not what do men think of our course, but how will it shew in the great day of trial? Is it tending to raise all around us to a higher and severer standard, or is it helping to give currency to those mutual concessions to each other's ease, and worldly interest, and immediate indulgence by which the rule of Christian duty is so soon and so fatally debased? Let us force ourselves to remember what must be the horror of that day, if then we find that, contenting ourselves with coldly pointing out a road we did not tread, we have lost our own souls, and dragged down with ourselves a multitude of others, to plunge us by their ruin into a deeper gulf and blacker pit of everlasting shame and anguish.

So again, thirdly, let us seek to form our rules of living not by men's opinion, but by God's Word and the Church's laws. This is our only safeguard against having our own estimate of right so continually lowered that we may grow well contented with ourselves when we ought to be fullest of vehement indignation at our unworthy conduct, and of holy revenge upon our easy life.

Fourthly, let us seek by all means for a deeper and keener insight into ourselves. Let us use all lawful means to know ourselves: as well by direct self-examination, as by that often useful means, the weighing other men's opinions of us against our too easy judgments of ourselves; nay, let us not refuse or slight this aid, even when those judgments are manifestly suggested by malice and exaggerated by falsehood. For even such malignant falsehoods may guide us to some truth we know not of ourselves, of which they are the

distorted figure. He was a shrewd judge of character who said, that a weak man more easily reads a wise one than a wise one reads himself, and who added that he had himself got many of his best hints about himself from snarling people. Their words made the sore smart, but they taught how to heal it.

Lastly, and above all, let me say, Remember the wide difference between trying to set an example, and living so as to be an example. The difference is, indeed, unspeakable both as regards others and as regards ourselves. The acts which we do directly to set an example, and the words which we speak to enforce it, are comparatively few and powerless when set beside the multitude of daily acts, looks, and words affecting others which, as I said at first, are always flowing forth on others from our spiritual and moral being. Our real influence on them for good depends on the spiritual efficacy of this perpetual, unconscious exhibition and imparting of ourselves to them. Nor is the difference less as it regards ourselves. To seek to be indeed a saint and so to bless others, will lead to our salvation; to seek to seem to be a saint even for the holiest purposes, is pretty sure to end in our damnation. For to frame your outward conduct with a view to affecting others is the sure way to become a mere delusion, a moral sign-post, a deceived hypocrite. This wretched device is the secret of an outside professional religion which soon fails to deceive any one but the miserable soul it ruins. It is not to this you are called: but in very deed so to frame and fashion your own inmost life in God's sight, that it may become, by the brightness of the renewed nature, a beacon-light to others. And to win

this blessing you must learn to be a true servant of God. Depend upon it, as the most certain truth in spiritual ethics, that you can only raise other men's devotion by being, not by seeming to be, devout; you can only quicken their zeal by winning from God a life which bursts forth into natural and real acts of love to Him. Secret self-denial must deepen your character; hidden communion with God, tarryings on the mount, hours of secret prayer,—these must make your face to shine so that, though you know not of it, men shall read its brightness. You must for yourself have wept for sin; for yourself have laid down its burden at the foot of your Master's Cross; for yourself have stooped to His yoke as if there were none but He and you in all this wide-spread world: you must for yourself have learned His lesson, and rejoiced in His salvation, and carried His cross, and then your life will, with no self-consciousness in you, be quickening and raising others.

Blessed is that man whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing. Oh blessed end! Oh glorious consummation! when the humble saint of Christ, who deemed most meanly of himself, shall find that through God's grace he has been the means of saving others; and that the end of his life of humble obedience has placed him suddenly amongst those truly wise "who shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;" amongst those who, having "turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."



# Maintaining Quietness and Peace.

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“WILL YOU MAINTAIN AND SET FORWARDS, AS MUCH AS LIETH IN YOU, QUIETNESS, PEACE, AND LOVE, AMONG ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE, AND ESPECIALLY AMONG THEM THAT ARE OR SHALL BE COMMITTED TO YOUR CHARGE?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests*





## ADDRESS XII.

### MAINTAINING QUIETNESS AND PEACE.

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**MY BRETHREN IN CHRIST,**—The next question in our Ordinal is this, “Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to your charge?”

This question, unlike most of the others which we have considered, is peculiar to the English Ordinal. We are, therefore, naturally led to enquire what it was in the history of our own Church which specially accounts for its insertion, and how far do those circumstances still continue at once to justify its place amongst these solemn questions, and to guide our own practical conduct of our ministry.

Now in this enquiry we shall do well to look first to the service itself for any light which may there be thrown upon this question. First, then, we may notice that it does not occur at all in the service for the Ordination of Deacons, an omission which would seem at once to mark it as concerning that which appertained to the authority of the priesthood. And this becomes still more evident when we look to the service for the Consecration of a Bishop, and see how the question is there enlarged. For in addition to the enquiry, “Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in

you, quietness, love, and peace among all men," there follows this further question, put to every bishop at his consecration, "and such as be unquiet, disobedient, and criminous, within your diocese," (will you) "correct and punish according to such authority as you have by God's Word, and as to you shall be committed by the ordinance of this realm?" Here, then, the full scope of the question becomes manifest. For the opposites of that "quietness, love, and peace" which we promise to maintain are distinctly named as "unquietness, disobedience, and crime;" and the bishop declares that to those who are guilty in this matter he will apply not only the exhortations of God's Word, but the disciplinary treatment of correction and punishment.

This, then, may guide us to the plain and obvious meaning of this question, and to the reasons for its insertion in our Ordinal.

It was impossible that so great a change as the Reformation of religion in this land in the sixteenth century should be unaccompanied by evils of a magnitude in some degree corresponding with its blessings; and one of the first and greatest of those evils was the shaking of Christian peace and love. The mere quickening, indeed, of religious earnestness must, amongst fallen men, always endanger peace. The soul that is suddenly wakened up to the perception of the vast realities round it, and of its own share in them, is driven into action; whilst this action must of course partake of the nature of the agent. The quickened zeal of seraphim burns evermore with the pure flame of unmingled love. But so it cannot be with such as we are. For even when the man is indeed offering himself up to God, there are

many earthly elements which, from their grosser nature, will mingle heavy clouds of dark and offensive vapour with his attempted offering. Limited knowledge, partial views, incompleteness in his best surrender of himself, and hence clinging selfishness, old prejudices, unworthy motives, cramped affections,—all these mar his service, and give it an earthly, self-willed, inharmonious tone. Consequently, there is in almost every case some want of full agreement among men of the most vehemently earnest zeal; often there is direct opposition, and the threat of bitter, mutual violence. This is the sword of which our blessed Master spoke as that which He was come to send on earth. His blessed truth, in its perfect purity, from His own lips of absolute knowledge and entire love, could not but awaken this earthly strife in earthly hearts. And such is the rule of His kingdom evermore. Wherever, therefore, there is a great awakening of religious earnestness either in a single heart, or in a parish, or in a nation, this evil of unquietness, religious strife, and discord are lying in some deadly ambush near. And evermore, therefore, at such a time is it a matter of the deepest wisdom to labour, as for the very chiefest and most necessary thing, for a spirit of quietness, peace, and love amongst those who form the fermenting mass.

This danger, which at all times besets such great movements, for special reasons particularly beset our own Reformation. For it is one part of the curse of an unrighteous tyranny, that it not only oppresses its victims during its supremacy, but that even in its removal it still blights them by the licence which is engendered by its dissolution. And so it was with us when, of

God's great mercy to our land, the old papal tyranny being swept away, the reasonable rule of the early Church was re-established, and His holy Word put into the hands, and brought home to the consciences, of all. The new liberty bred in many parts a wild licentiousness: with such a visible tearing of its victims, did the evil Spirit hardly depart from them whom it had possessed.

There were, indeed, of God's mercy to this land, many influences at work which made this evil far less amongst us than in most parts of the Church to which the Reformation reached. Yet even with ourselves the evil was distinctly marked. The Anabaptists, the Family of Love <sup>a</sup>, and various other sectaries troubled and disturbed our peace. All the records of our history at the time bear abundant marks of the fierce strivings of these spirits of turbulence and evil. Thus Archbishop Cranmer's Visitation Queries, in the second year of Edward VI., enquire, "Whether any indiscreet persons do uncharitably condemn and abuse priests and ministers of the Church <sup>b</sup>?" And two years later Bishop Ridley enquires, "Whether any do preach and defend that private persons may make insurrection, stir sedition, or compel men to give them their goods <sup>c</sup>?" Nor were these questions needless, for we read that "while the Papists on one hand were so busy in promoting their ends, there were a looser sort of professors of religion," who "disgraced the Reformation, on the other. For some there were that took the liberty of meeting together . . . to . . . vent dangerous doctrines and opinions <sup>d</sup>;" and, in spite

<sup>a</sup> Sparrow's Articles, p. 171.

<sup>b</sup> *Ib.*, p. 31.

<sup>c</sup> *Ib.*, p. 36.

<sup>d</sup> Strype's Cranmer, bk. ii. ch. 21. p. 334. edit. 1813.

of the various measures taken to prevent them, these evils were widely spread. "The people," we are told, "fell to arguing and disputing much upon religion<sup>e</sup>;" the natural result of which was a multitude of quarrels and divisions. Thus, in 1577, a royal proclamation states that "there are no small numbers of persons presuming to be teachers and preachers of the Church, (though neither lawfully thereunto called, nor yet fit for the same,) which contrary to our laws established for the public divine service of Almighty God, and the administration of His Holy Sacraments within this Church of England, do daily devise, imagine, propound, and put in execution sundry new rites and forms in the Church, as well by their unordinate preaching, readings, and ministering the Sacraments, as by procuring unlawfully of assemblies, and great number of our people out of their ordinary parishes, and from places far distant, (and that also some of our subjects of good calling, though therein not well advised,) to be hearers of their disputations and new devised opinions. . . . By which manner of assemblies great numbers of our people . . . are . . . schismatically divided among themselves into variety of dangerous opinions . . . . whereof the sequel cannot be but over dangerous to be suffered<sup>f</sup>." And in another royal proclamation, in 1575, it is declared, that "of some bold, and vain, curious men, new and other rites" are "found out and frequented, whereupon contentions, sects, and disquietness doth arise among Her people; and for one godly and uniform order, diversity of rites and ceremonies, disputations, and contentions, schisms,

<sup>e</sup> Strype's Life of Grindal, bk. ii. ch. 8.

<sup>f</sup> Ib., Appendix, No. X.



and divisions” are “already risen, and more like to ensue; the cause of which disorders her Majesty doth plainly understand to be the negligence of the bishops, and other magistrates &.”

Here, then, we may clearly see the object, and so the full meaning, of this question. The awakening people were in great peril of substituting an unbridled licence of religious speculation for the deadness of their old superstition. From this had sprung, already, unquietness, strife, and a lack of charity: and the minister of God’s Word, therefore, was called solemnly to pledge himself that he would strive to maintain and set forward quietness, peace, and love in his flock. He was to use his utmost efforts to set them free from the trammels of the old superstition; he was to awaken and arouse their consciences which had been sent asleep or enervated by the system of enforced private confession, priestly direction, and a vicarious religion; he was to feed their souls with the strong meat of God’s Word, instead of the sapless legends with which their appetite had been cloyed, and their spiritual strength wasted: but he was at the same time to guard them from the intoxication of soul which the sudden possession of great truths is so apt to produce; he was to strive to teach them to find their strength in the quietness and confidence of a humble, loving, personal religion; he was to remember how easy and how fatal it would be to make them noisy disputers about religious dogmas, instead of humble receivers of the truth, feeding their own souls, in a meek and loving peacefulness, upon the bread of life.

In many respects, my brethren, the temper of the

times in which it is our lot to minister seems to make a like exhortation specially useful. For around us, too, religious disputations abound. It is a time marked by a good deal, let us hope, of real earnestness in religious matters; and wherever there is earnestness there is temptation to division; certainly this time is marked by a great deal of noise about religion, and this is earnestness already turning into strife. Religious questions meet us in general society; they form, to a wholly new extent, the topics of public discussion, even in our Houses of Parliament. God knows whether, with all this interest about religious matters, we are a peculiarly devout, self-denying, or humble generation. But, beyond all doubt, there is amongst us a great deal of religious life of one quality or another: opinions are carried amongst us to the utmost extreme on all sides; so-called religious newspapers, which live upon our dissensions, stir up the strife, and often point it by the most shameless falsehood and personalities; party meetings, party societies, party names, party watch-words abound; and, to say the least, we have great ground for fearing that many lose their Christian love in their party zeal, and that the religion of Christ becomes to them at last little more than the struggle of a faction. Surely, then, at such a time as this, we have great need to listen to this searching, sobering question, put solemnly to us by our Church, and to weigh well the need of observing herein her teaching, and remembering that everything will be in vain in our ministry if it does not form humble, loving souls for Christ's heavenly kingdom.

Let us endeavour, then, to see some of the ways in

which the temptation against which we are here warned may assault us in our work, and how we may guard successfully against it.

First, then, let us see how it may attack ourselves. It may easily tempt us from that personal dealing with souls in our own appointed sphere which is the chiefest duty of every one of us. To most men of earnestness and energy of character there is something attractive in the large hazards of a public struggle. Some great truth which we do in very deed prize highly, or some institution which, as we believe, is bound up in the bundle of the Church's life, is rudely assailed. We cannot doubt that we are called by God's providence to contend herein earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and perhaps we are so called: and if this be clear, let us by no means hang back. And yet let us enter on the encounter with a trembling fear, not indeed of our enemies, but of ourselves. For even as we enter on it, what risks must we run. As we are drawn from our quieter duties in their narrower spheres, to deal with what seem to be, and perhaps are, wider interests on a broader field, how hard is it to maintain quietness, peace, and love in our own hearts: how easy to lose the confessor in the combatant. The loss may, perhaps, be first perceived in the flagging of our full interest in our own peculiar work; we feel it to be hard to come back to it again, and find it just as engrossing, just as full of supreme interest, just as much an object of earnest prayer, daily labour, and perpetual watching, as it was before. To our corrupt nature it is indeed very hard, after "visiting our brethren" in the king's army, and "seeing how they do, and taking their pledge," and

perhaps being drawn in ourselves to challenge, and with our sling and stone to slay, the contrary champion, to return when the conflict is over to our sheepfold in the wilderness with the same love and care for those committed to us as we had before; to be as ready, in defending them, to meet the lion and the bear in the solitary field, as to go forth against Goliath of Gath before the armies of Israel: and yet if our love be chilled, our affections disturbed, and our care for them drawn away, how spiritless and poor will be our service to them, how small our hope of good, how sure our own and their perpetual declension. How easily may the effect of such a course be traced in the parish. Whilst, perhaps, the busy pastor is maintaining the rights of the Church to conduct the education of the nation, his own village school, which was his constant, perhaps his daily haunt, is seldom entered, the visiting of the sick and of the whole within the cure is greatly intermitted, languidly laboured through, or hurried carelessly over; the parishioners no longer pass before him in his times of meditation and hours of prayer in all the deep interests of individual characters, studied, mastered, watched, and prayed for, and striven with, but they grow into a dull mass, in whose occasional presence his necessary public duties must be decently conducted. His weapon has lost its edge, his ministry its life.

Yet even these are only the external evils consequent on the change, and we have not yet reached their fountain-head of mischief within the pastor's own soul.

This may be most direct and substantive: for the incessant public vindication of any one special truth or in-

stitution is not without its own danger to us. Our minds are so apt to grow one-sided; the object on which they dwell becomes to our apprehension so preternaturally developed, that the due order and relation of the various parts of truth becomes disturbed in our minds. We may learn the instance of this danger from that common judgment of men which is fixed in the second sense which the word to 'dogmatize' has assumed. For it shews us that a special zeal for any peculiar dogma of the truth has become in men's minds naturally associated with the habit of a vapouring assumption of a state of authority. This acts back on our own temper. The truth and our view of the truth become confused in our minds, and we grow narrow and authoritative, and obstinate, and too often violent; unable to allow for the appearance which the same truth, as really held, may present to the mind of another; and apt to exact, at the price of endangering peace, breaking limits, and losing love, the implicit reception of our peculiar statement as the test of orthodoxy. Alas! how few are there of whom it can in any measure be said, as of the great champion of the Church's truth against the Arian heresy, "Only in Athanasius there was nothing observed throughout the course of that long tragedy, other than such as very well became a wise man to do and a righteous to suffer<sup>h</sup>."

But again, besides these dangers, more public labours must commonly plunge us into controversy with some, or into opposition to others; we shall have gainsayers to confute, and adversaries to silence; and the weapons of the world, so ready, alas! always for our hands, will seem

<sup>h</sup> Hooker, Eccl. Pol., lib. v. 42. 5. p. 180. edit. 1845.



to be thrust into them. We may at first begin to use our various faculties in the encounter really for the sake of truth : but how soon does there spring up in our hearts the love of victory for its own sake ! And then how soon does the tongue learn the language of raillery and sarcasm, and biting insinuation ; how quick does the eye grow to see a weak point, and the ready hand to strike home at it, and the heated spirit to rejoice in all the doubtful success, mixed motives, and manifold unkindnesses of the keen encounter of sharpened wits. How plainly in this case is the work of evil being accomplished in our soul, and all hope of the continuance of a faithful and prosperous ministry being destroyed. How likely is it that the once laborious pastor will be transformed into the restless, eager, busy, and by degrees unscrupulous, party leader, a troubler of the Church, a stirrer-up of its discords ; above all, a hideous wreck within, living upon external excitements, and more and more a stranger to that deep quietness, inward peace, and heavenly love, which are the Holy Spirit's work, and which must mark the character of every one who is admitted into heaven.

Where, then, is our safeguard ? Not certainly in inactivity and sloth. You will hardly suspect me of giving you such a counsel. God's truth must be maintained, the Church's doctrines must be vindicated, her powers of service must be attested and preserved, the dangers of life and action must not make us content with lethargy or death. We must contend, and that earnestly ; but we must do it with self-recollection, with continual watchfulness against this ever-ready evil, with perpetual self-suspicion, extending to our motives, our methods, and our acts ; with intervals of silence, with continual



prayers, with an eye ever fixed on our great Exemplar, with a full sight of Him who came to "send not peace on the earth, but a sword," and yet who did "not strive nor cry;" about Whom in closest presence all the hotness of the fight ever more gathered itself, and raged, and yet Who was ever "meek and gentle in heart," ever healing each separate sufferer who came to Him, ever giving "rest to souls."

But this danger besets not only us, the shepherds of the flock, it attacks our flocks also. How, then, are we not only to keep ourselves unharmed, but to preserve them from the like contagion?

Now the first requisite for a due discharge of this part of our work is, that we should set it before our minds as a special object of endeavour. "Love," as our good George Herbert says, "is our business and aim<sup>1</sup>." We must regard ourselves officially as peace-makers, as pledged by our office to prevent discords and to heal quarrels. Their existence in a parish is at once a consequence and a cause of sin. They are a great hindrance to the spread of Christ's truth; we find them to be often the secret cause of men's absence from public worship, still more of their neglect of the Holy Communion; they divide those who but for them would work together for God, they grieve the Blessed Spirit, they make our services dry and lifeless, and they lay waste souls. We must, then, regard it as one part of our duty to use our best endeavours to prevent and to heal them. And we can do neither without self-denial; and this self-denial so borne gives a dignity and nobleness to the commonest actions. Thus, for instance, it should not be a light matter which should keep the incumbent

<sup>1</sup> Country Parson, xxxv.

of a parish from presiding habitually at its vestry meetings, in order that he may allay the irritations and prevent the strifes which so frequently break out at them. And when so presiding, he should be always on the watch to promote kindly feelings between those who may be naturally disposed to differ. His influence thus used would soon be felt; and his very presence would breathe peace around him.

Thus, again, we should seek to know the real relations of our various parishioners to each other. There are often long-established grudges in a parish which for years have alienated persons or families, and kept them living in a dull and half-defined consciousness of sin, which our labour, and patience, and judgment may enable us absolutely to remove. The parties want some firm and kind hand gently but resolutely to probe the festering wound, and then draw together its gaping lips, and all is healed. But all this cannot be effected without our being ready to take a great deal of trouble with individual cases, nor without our being well known by our people, as well as our knowing them well, so that they may be ready to bear the touch of our hand as of one whom they know is at once loving and wise. It is far easier, but it is, comparatively speaking, wholly useless, to preach about brotherly love and forgiveness. To be healed, men must be dealt with one by one, and in no matter more than in this special work of ending old differences; for, in such cases, the least offences are great separators, and of all irritable things, angry tempers need to be handled with the gentlest and most discerning touch.

Nor is it only with such discords between individuals

that we have this special duty. We ought to be the reconcilers of those inevitable differences which divide classes of our parishioners,—teaching the richer and more educated of our people to feel with a true brotherly sympathy and respect for the peculiar trials and virtues of the poor and ignorant; softening the asperities which so naturally sour the minds of the farmers and middle class as employers,—and often poor and straitened employers,—towards their labourers and dependants; and being often by the side of the labourer and the poor with a view to allay those many bitter thoughts which will assail their minds against those above them in worldly provision. This work, again, is not an easy one. It requires much judgment, a real knowledge of the circumstances of all classes in their details, and even of their habits of thought, and great firmness also, to perform it effectually. We must yield improperly to none if we would succeed. It will not, for instance, really help the poor man if you merely sympathize with his trials; nay, you may so do this as to increase his bitterness against those who seem to him to cause them, and who do not, perhaps, as they should, mitigate their violence. To help him in this hard strife you must first, indeed, have made him sure that you do sympathize with him, but then you must dare, kindly of course, yet plainly and firmly for his own sake, to check his complaints, and to take the side of his seeming oppressors up to the measure of truth, and to make him feel that all the suffering is not, as he thinks, with himself, and all the wrong with them, but that he too is chargeable with his share of the wrong, as they bear theirs of the suffering.

But with even more earnestness than that with which we strive to heal or to prevent these common breaches of peace, must we seek to perform in the same spirit our special work as religious teachers.

From the action of the general principle which we saw at first, just in the proportion in which a parish increases in religious feeling will the dangers of religious discord multiply. The quickened religious life of each man is exposed to all the temptations of religious self-will, party-spirit, self-opinionatedness, and division. Accordingly, it is not rare to see parishes which, after long carelessness, have been awakened to a good deal of religious feeling by an exciting preaching of the great leading truths of the Gospel, if that preaching has not been accompanied by the enforcement of the character and authority of the Church, and of the duty of a quiet, peaceable, and loving submission of the individual will for Christ's sake to her rule, absolutely torn to pieces by division. Every other man is soon a teacher; and "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," is the utterance of mouth after mouth, only it is spoken of miserable representatives of those great apostles. Now it is to this evil very specially that this question seems to point; will you so teach your people that, instead of exciting them to a fever of division or puffing them up with a bitter self-sufficient dogmatism, you may set forward amongst them quietness, peace, and love?

And in saying how this is to be effected, the very order of the words suggests much. We must seek to encourage quietness in religion; to beware of sudden, boastful, noisy effects. We must aim greatly at promoting peace. There are ministries which are abso-

lutely fatal to peace, which cannot teach a truth without implying that others do not teach it; perhaps do not hold, perhaps contradict it. It is not difficult to see in the sensitive, captious, snarling, narrow tone of religious feeling which sometimes pervades a parish, the fruit of such a ministry, even when it has been zealous, laborious, and, in the main, faithful; but marred by the spirit of partizanship and contention. If we would really be a blessing to our people, we must strive above all things to teach them the great Gospel lesson of "holding the truth in love." We must make them feel that it is better to know but a little and to love much, than to have all other knowledge and to lack that best teaching of charity.

Another great safeguard against this danger is to be found in close and separate dealing with the souls of our flock. We must watch over them, and know them singly in their temptations, characters, and tempers, if we would build them up in reality, meekness, and love. We must not dream of our work being done when we quit the pulpit: great as is the importance of preaching, it must not usurp the whole of our ministry; people may be preached into the unreal, excited state of feeling which is the fruitful parent of self-conscious and self-confident divisions; but if we hope to form in them, under the aid of God's grace, the humble, loving temper of the true disciple, we must follow up the best and truest sermons by the ceaseless vigilance of a daily, loving care.

Above all, my brethren, and it is indeed the hardest, as it is the last, thing I will press on you, if we would fulfil this promise we must be ourselves men of quiet-



ness, peace, and love. And this involves a great deal at all times; for always there must be many temptations to unquietness which specially beset us. Our relations to our flocks, our comparative independence of them, and so the proneness of our fallen nature to study our own inclinations,—it may be our own mere crotchets, rather than their wishes, partly engender these temptations. And, again, our relations to each other tend to increase the danger: the mutual independence of the pastors of separate but neighbouring parishes tends to create a studied difference of tone between one and another; the natural pride of independence vents itself in some badge or other of distinctive doctrine or practice, and imperils unity or aggravates division. Nor is this all. Not only is our separation in different parishes attended with this danger: it besets also our union in the same parish. For under our system, men of the same education, the same birth, and the same means are combined together as incumbent and curate, and have to work and act together. Now it may happen that both absolutely agree, and then all will, of course, work harmoniously: but on the other hand, it will often happen that some difference, in view, in tone, in practice, exists between them; and in such cases harmony can only be maintained by the one yielding simply and lovingly to the other; and in our system the curate must yield to the incumbent. But in many cases this is no easy concession. The curate may be the older, or the wiser, or the more popular man. He may be in the right in the matter in dispute, and may know that he is; and it is hard in such cases for human nature to yield. It is so easy, without even seeming to appear to enlist support, to



create a sensation, and to divide a parish. There are some men who really, without meaning it, are always appealing to party spirit, creating a faction, weaving an intrigue. The threads of such an entanglement seem to shoot out from them unconsciously, and all is confusion. Deep is the mischief done by such unquietness to the cause of Christ and to the usefulness of a ministry. Years may roll on, and many souls have been lost, before the evil influences of such a lack of peace have passed wholly away.

But besides these dangers, which beset all times, there are some which specially beset such days as ours. For it is hard in times of strife and party spirit to find men who are thoroughly in earnest, and yet who have not consciously identified themselves with any party as a party. Yet if we do become party men, our direct usefulness is fearfully blighted, and we are certain to be stirrers-up of strife; increasing party spirit on both sides, by increasing exclusiveness of feeling on our own side, and embittering opposition on the other. Here, then, we must guard jealously both our own spirit and our own demeanour; for in times of trouble he who would really be a man of quietness must eschew all those party badges by which inward party feelings are at all times vented, manifested, and increased. The most innocent trifles may thus become of the utmost moment. I need hardly remind you that in times of great civil suspicion the mere colour of a dress has been cause enough to deluge the streets of a city with blood. Most closely does this apply to us. Let me suggest to you a single instance. Some amongst us desire, for the very best objects, that our dress as clergymen was more

distinctly demonstrative of our calling. They urge the wholesome restraint to ourselves which such an outward mark must prove against levity or sports unbecoming our sacred character. They dwell on the self-recollectedness it would help to engender, and on the aid it would give us in society by reminding others as well as ourselves who and what we are. They point to many and good examples of the usefulness of so natural a distinction. They have much to urge, and they are not unwilling to practise what they commend; they would fain, if it were possible, bring back into ordinary use the cassock and the tippet. Failing this, they adopt a dress as near as possible to it, and as remote as possible from that of ordinary laymen. On the other side, it is urged that the English clergyman is an English citizen; that, like other men, he marries, mixes in society, and takes his full share in all civil and social matters; that he is not like the Roman ecclesiastic, a member of a separate, unsympathizing class; and that on his retaining his freedom from this ecclesiastical separation depends greatly his acceptance and his usefulness with Englishmen. This party, therefore, whilst it would retain those moderate badges of colour and shape which all men identify with clerical attire, would eschew all prominent and startling diversity of dress from that of sober laymen. On their skirts, as on the skirts of the other side, hang a loose cloud of extreme men, who pride themselves in throwing off all the established sobriety of a clergyman's apparel. Now how light a thing this is, and yet how important. For the adopting either one extreme or the other, marks internal unquietness, and soon disturbs external peace. The hottest strifes and the most lasting prejudices are engendered and kept

alive by these outward badges. Many a young clergyman, who might have preached Christ and spread the life of His Church throughout a parish around him, has marred all his usefulness and raised a host of enemies by the straightness of his collar or the length of his skirt. And what think you in the hour of death, and what in the day of judgment, will be the issues of such a loss? I would, my brethren, press most earnestly upon you the great Christian duty of quietness in such matters as these. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

And this same principle applies with even greater force to our vestments in the sanctuary, and to the adoption in our services of rites which, however they may be justified by the letter of long-sleeping laws, are strange and novel in the eyes of our people. I have no hesitation in saying to you that it is better in these matters to acquiesce for a while in a long-established custom of deficiency than to stir our people up to suspicion and hostility by the impetuous restoration of a better use. More harm has, I believe, been done amongst us by such attempts to restore bits of a ritual to which our people are unaccustomed, than by any other single error. Our people argue—and do they argue altogether amiss?—that these changes either mean something or nothing: if something, what, they ask, is it that they mean, and whither are they leading us? if nothing, do they not imply either puerility, unquietness, or folly in him who can for nothing disturb our minds, or even alarm our prejudices? Depend upon it, my brethren, that if we are to keep this promise of our Ordinal, we must as to these matters—so trifling in themselves, so momentous as indications of a drift-

ing current—inwardly and outwardly manifest ourselves to be men of quietness and peace.

And if this is so, we must, as to the yet deeper quality of love, have learned ourselves to embody what we would fain reproduce in others. The spirit of love must have leavened and moulded our spirits. We must have learned from Him, who only can teach them to us, its full reality, its constraining power, and its unwearying tenderness. Love in our own hearts will flavour all our teaching with its own blessed presence. We shall teach, and our people, through God's help, will imbibe, truth in a truly loving spirit. They will not be so ready to wrangle about the great doctrines of the Gospel as to live on them. They will not so much be keen to detect an error, as quick-sighted to apprehend a truth. Here, too, depend upon it, the pastor will to a great degree be reproduced in his flock. Love will generate love. The battle therefore here, as elsewhere, must be won in secret, and upon our knees. When we have been loosed beneath the cross of our Lord of the burden of our own sins; when we have looked, indeed, for ourselves into that calm, divine face of unutterable love; when we have heard His voice of healing pity speak to our wounded hearts; when His pierced hand has been laid on us; when we have, as accepted penitents, poured forth our souls before Him,—then shall we have learned, as we never otherwise can learn, how to go forth day by day amongst our people, reproducing amongst them His work upon ourselves, whilst we “maintain quietness, peace, and love amongst all Christian people, and specially amongst them that are committed to our charge.”



## Obedience to Ordinary, &c.

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“WILL YOU REVERENTLY OBEY YOUR ORDINARY, AND OTHER CHIEF MINISTERS UNTO WHOM IS COMMITTED THE CHARGE AND GOVERNMENT OVER YOU; FOLLOWING WITH A GLAD MIND AND WILL THEIR GODLY ADMONITIONS, AND SUBMITTING YOURSELVES TO THEIR GODLY JUDGMENTS?”

*Office for the Ordination of Priests.*





## ADDRESS XIII.

### OBEDIENCE TO ORDINARY, &c.

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THE concluding question of the Ordination Service, which we have now reached, may not at first sight appear to afford as much matter for profitable reflection as those which have preceded it. For it deals directly with our more external obligations, and the law of obedience to ecclesiastical superiors. Still, being placed as it is amongst those questions which are solemnly put to you at one of the most important moments of your life, in the midst of the prayers, exhortation, and benedictions of this holy service; being moreover put to you in the presence and in the name of God; and yet again, the obligation incurred by your answer to it being one of the conditions on which you receive your orders and exercise your ministry,—it is not possible, consistently with fulfilling the course on which I have entered, to pass it by.

There is, moreover, no question which concerns more directly your own duty and practice at many turns of your ministerial life; there is perhaps none which the temper of the present times and the independence of authority which that temper produces renders it more necessary for us to study and consider before we take the obligation on ourselves.

The question, then, as it stands in the offices for the Ordination of Deacons and Priests when we take them together, is this—"Will you reverently obey your ordinary and other chief ministers of the Church, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?"

Now, as the obligation which you will contract by making the promise contained in your answer to this question, binds you to do what you understand the imposer of that question means you to promise, it is of great moment that you should understand rightly what is herein the mind of the Church of England.

This is, of course, to be at last deduced from the plain natural and grammatical sense of the words themselves; but it may aid us in finding that sense if we first briefly trace the origin of such a question in our Ordinal. In some respects its history appears at first sight to be singular. We have no trace of any such question in the earliest times. And the absence of this may seem to imply that the rule of the first order in the Christian ministry over those below itself was not then acknowledged, and that the obedience which this promise was intended to secure was not then enforced. But when we look more closely into the matter, we shall see that nothing can be farther from the fact. The authority of the ordaining bishop over the deacon or priest whom he ordained was then at least as great as at any later time. St. Paul's directions to Timothy and Titus, and the addresses to the angels of the Church in Asia, carry up the evidence of this rule even to apostolic times.

For St. Timothy was left "at Ephesus" that he "might charge some that they teach no other doctrine<sup>a</sup>," and in doing this he was both to "command and teach<sup>b</sup>." He was under certain rules "to receive an accusation against an elder<sup>c</sup>," and to judge him, so that if need were he should even "rebuke him before all<sup>d</sup>;" and Titus was left in Crete "to set in order the things that are wanting<sup>e</sup>," "to stop the mouths" of "unruly talkers<sup>f</sup>," and "to rebuke with all authority," suffering "no man to despise him<sup>g</sup>;" and the Bishop of the Church of Ephesus is commended in the message of the Lord because he had "tried them which said they were apostles and were not, and had found them liars<sup>h</sup>;" and in all the succeeding addresses to the angels of the Churches on them is charged the lack, or in them is commended the vigour, of that discipline which it was given them to administer. And if from the scanty records of the apostolic era we pass on to the succeeding history of the early Church, we find everywhere the same rule. Those of you who have read with any care the writings of St. Ignatius, must remember how frequently repeated are his exhortations on this head, as, for instance, to the Church at Smyrna, "Let all follow the Bishop as the Apostles<sup>i</sup>," and again, in his letter to Polycarp, "Give heed unto the Bishop, that God may give heed to you<sup>k</sup>." And to the same effect speak the succeeding Fathers; amongst whom, as bearing remarkably on the special point with which we are now concerned, I may remind

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. i. 3.<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 11.<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. v. 19.<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. v. 20.<sup>e</sup> Tit. i. 5.<sup>f</sup> Tit. i. 10, 11.<sup>g</sup> Tit. ii. 15.<sup>h</sup> Rev. ii. 2.<sup>i</sup> S. Ignat. Smyrn., viii. p. 18.<sup>k</sup> Id. in Epist. ad Polyc., n. vi. p. 79.

you of Tertullian's words, "Dandi quidem (baptismum) habet jus, summus sacerdos qui est Episcopus: dehinc presbyteri et diaconi; *non tamen sine Episcopi auctoritate*<sup>1</sup>;" in which words he expresses the then universally admitted principle that the priesthood and diaconate derived their authority from the Apostolical commission, given to the Episcopate, which accordingly he traces up to St. John himself, where, speaking of the succession of Bishops, he says, "Habemus et Joannis alumnas Ecclesias . . . . Ordo . . . . Episcoporum ad originem recens in Johannem stabit auctorem<sup>m</sup>." And St. Irenæus asserts that Hyginus, Bishop of Rome, "had the ninth lot of episcopal succession from the Apostles<sup>n</sup>;" and that "to Linus, when they were founding and ordering the Church, the blessed Apostles delivered the episcopate for administering the Church<sup>o</sup>."

The same principle pervades others of the earliest writers; as for instance where St. Jerome, that stout maintainer of the rights of presbyters, expressly declares, "Thence it has come to pass that without the command of the Bishop neither the Presbyter nor Deacon has the right of baptizing<sup>p</sup>;" and St. Ambrose adds, "Though the Presbyters may have done this, yet is the beginning of their ministry from the highest priest—a *summo sacerdote*<sup>q</sup>,"—an expression explained, as we have seen, by Tertullian to mean the Bishop.

Accordingly, following up this principle, the bond

<sup>1</sup> Tertull. de Bapt., c. xvii. Paris, 1664, p. 230, C. 3.

<sup>m</sup> Tertull. adv. Marcion, lib. iv. c. v. Paris, 1664, p. 415, D. 12.

<sup>n</sup> Iren. contra Hæreses, lib. i. c. xxvii. <sup>o</sup> Id., lib. iii. c. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Adversus Luciferianos, vol. iv. p. 295, Par. 1706.

<sup>q</sup> De Sacram., lib. iii. c. 1. Paris, 1590, ii. p. 362, c.

of duty by which the ordained was bound to the ordainer was so strict that it could be released only at his own will and by his own act. No Bishop was allowed to take from the diocese of another his priests or deacons without his entire concurrence<sup>r</sup>; whilst within his diocese the bishop's rule over his clergy was subject only to canonical restrictions on its exercise, which presuppose its authority, and to the appellate jurisdiction of the metropolitan, or provincial synod<sup>s</sup>. All of these details, therefore, lead us back to what was then the universal estimate of the bishop's office, namely, that it was derived from the direct appointment and mission of Christ Himself, and so was the fountain and head of the derived authority and mission of deacons and priests. Thus in each Church the presiding bishop, as one member of the undivided episcopate, was held to be the depositary of ecclesiastical power and right for that diocese; whilst the priests and deacons, and other ministers of the Church, were, in their several grades, offices, and employments, his deputies. To him in his office, it was then believed, had been committed by Christ all the powers of the ministry which He had founded; whilst from that office, under the leading of the Spirit, had been derived by the Apostles, first the Diaconate, and then the Priesthood, the holders of which orders were entrusted severally with certain parts of the bishop's office, which they were in his behalf, and in his stead, to exercise under his direction in the different districts of the diocese in which they were placed, and so to mul-

<sup>r</sup> See Bingham, *Antiquit.*, lib. iv. c. vi. § 4.

<sup>s</sup> See this at length in Bingham, above quoted, lib. ii. c. iii. § 9.



tively by their ministrations that service which it was impossible for him to render everywhere in his own person.

So universal, indeed, was this belief, that the proofs of it are to be found in the records of almost every successive council, general, national, or provincial, which, either by direct canons or by the whole scope of their language and action, imply the obligation of all other ecclesiastics to obey their bishops. When this was first reduced into a specific promise of obedience, such as that which we are now considering, it is not so easy to say, nor is it of great moment. For the introduction of the specific promise marks the time, not when the duty of obedience was first asserted, but when the tendency to disobedience was from various causes so far strengthened that men sought to counteract it by the introduction of a specific promise to obey.

Some marks of this having been the origin of the pledge we are now considering survive in our own Ordinal, and are yet more plain in that of the rest of the Western Church. For whilst with us the promise of the priest is fuller than that of the deacon, including the pledge of submitting himself to the godly judgments, as well as of obeying the commands of his bishop, in the common ritual of the West it is the priest alone who makes any promise. For the deacon was held to be himself bound to obey his priest, and, as that priest was subject to the bishop, still more was his inferior in the ministry. The nearness of the presbyter to the bishop, and the larger authority with which he was trusted, were what rendered needful his promise of subjection. Of an actual promise of obedience some traces may be found

as early as the year 600 after Christ, and its adoption became gradually common in the Western Church<sup>1</sup>. In some cases it took the form of an oath, and in that form was more than once prohibited by councils<sup>2</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> The Tenth Council of Toledo, seventh century, expressly declares that obedience to bishops is to be promised by *all* who enter into Holy Orders. The following form is from a Latin Ordinal of the fourteenth or fifteenth century:—

“*Epūs interrogat.*—‘Vis Epō tuo ad cujus parochiam ordinandus os obediens esse et consentiens in licitis secundum canonica statuta?’  
*Resp.*—‘Volo et hoc Deo et Sanctis ejus ita in præsenti promitto prout scio et adimplere valeo, ita me Deus adjuvet et Sancti ejus.’ *Epūs dicat.* ‘Voluntatem tuam bonam et rectam ad perfectionem sibi beneplacitum Deus perduere dignetur.’ *Resp.*—‘Amen.’”—(*Pontific. Eccles. Mogunt. circ.* 1400. *An. Dni.*)

In the Roman Ordinal there is no *promise* made by a deacon. A priest makes the vow in the following manner, after the ordination, so far as regards the power to consecrate and to absolve, is concluded:—“Mox unusquisque iterum ad Pontificem accedit: et genuflexus ponit manus suas junctas inter manus Pontificis dicentis cuilibet, si suus est Ordinarius, ‘Promittis, mihi et successoribus meis reverentiam, et obedientiam?’ Et ille respondet, ‘Promitto.’ Si vero Pontifex non est suus Ordinarius: . . . dicit singulis Presbyteris secularibus:’

“Promittis Pontifici Ordinario tuo, &c., &c.”

There is nothing more *promised* than what is here stated. The question then arises respecting the meaning or extent of the terms “reverentiam et obedientiam.” The question has been often discussed, but that which now regulates the practice of Rome, or rather what gives expression to the Roman doctrine, is the bull of Benedict XIV., Jan. 14, 1747. The subject seems to be exhausted by a sentence in the *Summa Angelica*, p. 245 (b):—“Illi enim qui præest spiritualibus obediendum est in spiritualibus necessariis ad salutem, vel ad hanc pertinentibus, sicut Episcopo et cæteris prælatis ecclesiasticis ab his qui subjiuntur jurisdictioni eorum.”

<sup>2</sup> Thus a canon of the Council, Cabilonens. II., ann. 813, enacts:—

“Dictum est de quibusdam fratribus, quod eos quos ordinaturi sunt *jurare* cogant, quod digni sint, et contra canones non sint facturi, et obediens sint Epō, qui eos ordinat, et ecclesiæ in quâ ordinantur.

ground of objection, however, to it never was that it was the claim of any new authority, or the undue extension of one formerly existing, but that it was objectionable as a needless superfluity<sup>x</sup>, because the very act of ordination implied the obligation; whilst in the form in which it was administered it might become the occasion of leading him who took it into sin.

In the Eastern Church no express form of promise was ever introduced. But the same obligation of obedience was abundantly implied<sup>y</sup>.

*Quod juramentum quia periculosum est, omnes una inhibendum statuimus."*

One of the Decretal Epistles mentions a form used in the time of Innocent III. (thirteenth century), and in which this kind of promise to the Church is distinctly made. But Innocent III. ruled, on being consulted, that the promise chiefly regarded the bishop. Decret. ad Præpos. et capit. Placent. cap. cum Clerici xix., de verb. sign.

<sup>x</sup> See Thomassin, De Disciplin. Eccles.

<sup>y</sup> The following quotations will serve to prove—1. That the ceremonial in the ordination of a deacon is intended to shew the reverence due on his part to his bishop; 2. the same recognition in the ordination of a priest; 3. that the inferior offices derive their power from the plenitude of the episcopate.

Καὶ ὡς πτερὰ σημαίνει ἀπρωρημένον τῶν ὤμων, καὶ τὸ τρισάγιον ᾄσμα τῶν ἀγγέλων γεγραμμένον ἔχει καὶ τοῦτο σφραγίζει μὲν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς αὐτὸς δὲ ἀσπάζεται καὶ τὴν χεῖρα τοῦ ιεράρχου δεικνὺς ὅτι καὶ ἐρᾷ τοῦ δώρου καὶ τιμᾷ τοῦτο, καὶ τὸν διδόντα ὡς εὐεργέτην τοιοῦτων.—(*Ritus Ordinatio. Diacon. (Gr. Eccl.) ex Sytheon. Thessal., in Morini Comment. de Sacris Ecclesiæ Ordinationibus*, fol Paris. 1655, pp. 140, 1.)

Πρῶτον δὲ λαμβάνει ἀρχιερατικὴν εὐλογία, καὶ οὕτως ἐξέρχεται δεικνὺς ὅτι ὑπὸ τὸν ιεράρχην ἐστὶ, καὶ ὑπ' αὐτὸν τετελείωται. Καὶ μετὰ τὸ εὐξασθαι πάλιν εὐλογεῖται τὸ τῆς ὑπαχοῆς ἐκπληρῶν, καὶ ὡς μισθὸν λαμβάνων τοῦ ἔργου τῆς ὑπηρεσίας αὐτοῦ τῆς ιερᾶς.—(*Ibid.*, p. 147. E.)

Τοῦ μὲν Ἐπισκόπου τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶ τὸ διδάσκειν, τὸ βαπτίζειν, τὸ λύειν καὶ δεσμεῖν τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἁμαρτίας, καὶ τὸ χειροτονεῖν τοὺς λοιποὺς

From the earliest times, then, we may trace the presence of this principle, that in ordination the priest and deacon contracted a new obligation of obedience to their bishop; and in the West, from the year 600 after Christ, we find this principle of obedience gradually fixed in the words of some direct engagement. The remarkable fact that our Church at the Reformation retained this actual promise, when, as a common rule, she cast aside all that was not primitive, amounts to a declaration on her part that she considered the obligation as always binding, and the express promise as needful for these days.

It is highly probable that the same appreciation of the temper of those unruly times, which, as we have seen, led our reformers to introduce the preceding question, induced them also to retain this; and so to testify against that growing contempt of authority which broke out afterwards into the sins and schisms of puritanical independence. We should therefore conclude, unless there be some reason shewn to the contrary, that she retained the question and the promise in the same sense in which they were before employed, and that sense will agree best with the natural meaning of the words themselves, which we will now go on to examine. What, then, is first promised, is a reverent obedience, in answer to the question, "Will you reverently obey your ordinary?" by which no less can be meant than an obedience for conscience sake, as a matter of reverence, and not of legal necessity. To interpret this, then, as if it meant no more than "I will

τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἅπαντας βαθμούς· ταῦτα γὰρ ἀμέσως ὁ κύριος τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις παρέσχεν.—(*Gabriel. Philadelp. Metropol. de Ordin. c. v.*)

submit to such commands as can by course of law and under penalty be enforced upon me," is a manifest evasion of the words, as it is of the intention, of the promise. For there would be no object in exacting a promise of submitting to that legal force to which without any such promise we must equally submit; and such a submission would manifestly be an enforced and not a reverent submission; a submission to power and not to duty; from fear, and not from love; from necessity, and not from reverence. Next, we should notice that the words which immediately follow, explain and limit this promise. They first explain it. For the description of the "chief ministers," as those "to whom is committed the charge and government over you," at once leads our thoughts up to Him who has committed to them this charge, and thus reminds us that our obedience to them is an obedience to Him, to be rendered, not for fear, but for conscience sake. At the same time the words which follow confine this promise of obedience to that subject-matter to which alone the charge of our spiritual rulers extends, that is to say, to our conduct as ministers of the Church of Christ. Moreover, the obedience promised is itself limited by those general laws which bind the ruler as much as the ruled; so that the ruler can properly enjoin upon those under his rule only either what those laws have previously enacted or by true logical deduction imply, or such matters as the Law has left to be settled by the voice of living authority. And accordingly the words continue; "following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting ourselves to their godly judgments." Where, again, the



ready submissive temper of one acting for conscience sake, and not under legal compulsion, is distinctly expressed; and the gloss that we are bound to obey such commands only as can, if we disobey, be enforced on us by processes of law, is absolutely excluded.

But another and a most important limitation to the duty of obedience is now brought in, namely, that the admonitions and judgments to which we submit must always be "godly." Here, then, arises a new question: how far, namely, this last limitation extends, which cannot be dismissed without some more particular enquiry.

There is, indeed, no doubt thus far: that by this limitation all obedience to any command which is contrary to God's will is expressly excluded. But then arises the further questions, 1st. How far does this word 'godly' extend? and then, 2ndly, Who is to judge how far any particular command is or is not godly?

For if the decision of this question rest altogether with the Ordinary, he may command that which he esteems to be godly, though in fact it is ungodly; and so, if absolute and unquestioning obedience be our duty, we may be compelled to do what is wrong; or if, on the other side, the receiver of the command is the sole judge of what is godly in the injunctions of authority, and if there be no certain limit to the extent of the term, he may conclude that every direction which crosses his own will, or is contrary to his own judgment, is one which, not being for the true furtherance of God's cause, he may lawfully reject as an ungodly judgment. Now the solution of this question must be found in a consideration of the ground on which alone the duty of obedience rests. We are, then, to obey those who have



the rule over us, because their power is from God. For "there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation<sup>z</sup>."

When, therefore, we are bidden by a competent authority to do anything or to leave it undone, we have at first sight simply one course, and that is to obey; because we are bound to consider the command which comes to us from an authority placed over us by God as coming to us from God Himself. And to this there can be but one valid counter-plea, namely, that the command which comes to us from the deputy contradicts the command of Him who sends him. This was the apostles' plea under the threatening of the Jewish rulers, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard<sup>a</sup>." And again, "Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men<sup>b</sup>." And this plea, where it is rightly grounded, is undoubtedly valid. But then it is one which can be urged only in extreme cases, and it is put forward in every instance under a fearful risk. It does not claim for the subject of command the right of settling for himself how much of that which is commanded he shall obey, which were to abolish all real obligations to obedience, but admitting that the measure of command is in the breast of authority, it impeaches him who holds this delegated power of being guilty of unfaithfulness to the highest source of all authority, and claims on the issue

<sup>z</sup> Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

<sup>a</sup> Acts iv. 19.

<sup>b</sup> Acts v. 29.

of this charge to be at last justified as one who is indeed obeying the Principal in disobeying the immediate ruler. So that it is a plea which cannot be urged in defence of our preference of one lawful course rather than another ; nor of our judgment of the more expedient of two lawful courses, but then only when we can appeal to God Himself that the command which we neglect or violate is contrary to His revealed will ; when we can distinctly affirm, ‘ This is an ungodly command, and one therefore which I must disobey, or sin against the Lord.’ This ultimate licence to disobey,—used under the awful risk of appealing to the Supreme Judge to reverse the general sentence of damnation pronounced upon the disobedient—all must concede who acknowledge the supremacy of conscience as the last authority to each man. But whilst we freely concede this, we are bound to add that to concede more is, in truth, to do away with all authority. For such universal licence must be the result of that further liberty, sometimes claimed, at least in practice, for those under command, for whom it is urged that, under shelter of this limitation of submission to such judgments only as are godly, each one may settle for himself whether any particular direction be expedient or inexpedient, and then may either act upon it or reject it according to his own conclusion. For by such a rule not only would each one be left, in truth, to act upon his own opinion, but to exact a promise of submission would simply be absurd, since where our judgment concurred with the voice of authority the promise would be needless, and where they differed it would not apply.

To this, then, we must conclude that our promise of

obedience binds us; that in respect of our exercise of that ministry into which we seek to be admitted, we will submit our will to the commands, and our practice to the judgment of our spiritual rulers, within the limits of those laws by which they as well as we are bound, subject only to the further limitation, that nothing which is contrary to God's revealed will can be by them rightly ordered, or by us lawfully obeyed.

Thus much it has seemed to me, my brethren, needful to set plainly before you, as the explanation of that promise by which you are about to bind yourselves, and for your own practical guidance hereafter. And now let me turn your thoughts to another side of this subject, on which it is far pleasanter to me to speak.

Let me, then, pray you to notice that this whole provision for authority and obedience presupposes the existence upon earth of a spiritual kingdom of Christ, in the offices of which, with their responsibilities and powers, we are placed. And this, for your comfort and for our warning, ought to remind us both of the spiritual link which binds us together, and of what, as the correlative of your obedience, you are entitled to look for from your bishop. His is no office of this world, with its cold proprieties, its sharp-eyed suspicious vigilance, its rigid exactness of discipline, and its remorseless readiness to punish. His very title of command points us to a different standard, for he is to be "the father in God" of those committed to his government. His rule is to be, in the strictest sense of the word, "Paternal." There should be in it the tender sympathy, the continual oversight, the watchful providence, the glad rejoicing in success, the counsels of affection with their truth and

wisdom, the forbearance towards infirmity, the untiring love which distinguishes a father's rule. And this of necessity presupposes affectionate intercourse, a knowledge of your persons and your work, a glad readiness to enter with you into its detail, to consider with you all questions of difficulty, to take honestly the responsibility of advising you, to help you to bear the burdens which the weight or the perplexity of your duty or the opposition of men may bring upon you. Above all, it implies a fellowship with you in your watchings, labours, prayers, and intercessions; continual supplications for you and your work; united labour and worship with you, whenever they are possible; free and full consultations with you on all greater matters, and a living sense that to him is committed by God the diocese over which he presides as one great parish, in which you, as his fellow-workers, have your special share in that common task of which he, as set over all, is to render to the Supreme Lord his general account.

Surely, beloved brethren, if this scheme of a measured subordination of commission under one paternal rule were a plan merely of man's devising, it would be, of all plans we can conceive, that which would be the best fitted to secure that combination of a vigorous heartiness of independent action with an harmonious unity of common results, which in all great works is the truest security for full success. But if, instead of being a mere scheme of man's devising, we believe that this is the appointed organization of the Church of Christ; if in acting simply on it we may look for His Presence with us in our work; if these be of the "joints and bands"

by which "all the body holding the Head" has from it "nourishment ministered," and so is "knit together" and "increaseth with the increase of God<sup>c</sup>;" if it be indeed thus that from Christ "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love<sup>d</sup>;" then we can understand something of the full strength and blessedness which must result from our cleaving to it faithfully and closely. For then we shall be able faithfully to believe in, and so be ready, each one in our several place and work, to claim the presence, and direction, and comfort, and aid of that Divine Person of the blessed Trinity, God the Holy Ghost, whose indwelling is promised to the Church of Christ. Then, through His blessing, may we look to find amongst us those great gifts both of the spiritual life in ourselves, and of ministerial usefulness towards others, which He vouchsafes only to the union of the highest measures of earnestness and obedience; to that bowing of the individual will, combined with the quickening of the individual conscience, for which the Gospel of Christ and that alone makes provision. And this will give to our labours, in our several rooms of service, that strength which comes from knowing that we are all but several channels of the common stream of His grace, each one a living member in the living body, with our own special charge from Christ, not feeble, separate persons, weakly striving against overmastering dangers. Thus may we be kept humble if God vouchsafes us success, and undismayed if He withholds it

<sup>c</sup> Col. ii. 19.

<sup>d</sup> Eph. x. 16.



from our best efforts. Thus, moreover, shall we exhibit, to those without, the true aspect of Christ's unbroken army, strong in the inward unity of love, and "terrible" to all assailants "as an army with banners."

On the other hand we cannot over-estimate the degree in which the life and efficiency of the Church must be impaired by the loss or weakening of this just subordination and connexion of her several parts. For this injury to her unity disturbs the flow of those currents of divine grace on which alone depend her inner life and outward efficiency, and soon brings decay into her whole being. The highest graces of seraphic love, intense and absorbing devotions, unsullied purity, and a noble prodigality of self-sacrifice disappear first; then the lower though most blessed gifts of earnestness and zeal in action are debased, first by the intermixture of personal vanity in her clergy, and then by party spirit everywhere. Individual pastors work for themselves with a self-willed independence of choice and action. Brotherly love is weakened, and mutual confidence impaired. Then knots of men gather round self-chosen leaders, party watchwords and cruel shibboleths are framed, and these increase the evil from which they sprung. A few draw together and draw apart from others. Then follow still more straitened graces, and the loss of charity, mutual repulsions, hard judgments, hard thoughts, hard words of one another; then comes separated action, the Church's instruments must be divided, societies must rival and weaken one another, men are to be judged as they are ranged under the banner of this or that association; earthly passions, earthly motives, earthly names, are debasing and dividing the



fair heritage of Christ. Then follow open strifes and angry recriminations, whilst, like obscene birds which scent from afar the coming carnage, calumnious and malignant publications, bred of our internal discords, flock unreprieved about the servants of the Prince of purity and peace. How is the gracious Spirit grieved by such fightings and divisions! How many prayers are blown aside! How many hands are weakened! How many hearts are broken! Alas! how many souls are lost, by such unholy strifes! How is the seamless coat of Christ torn! How is the Holy Name blasphemed! How are the Church's graces lost! How is her white raiment stained and the place of her candlestick endangered by their continuance and increase!

Here, then, are the certain consequences of insubordination in the camp of God. Alas! beloved brethren, can we fail to perceive, as we trace them out and then reflect upon our own condition, that we as a Church have indeed abundant reason to cry mightily to God to enable us to see the "great dangers we are in through our unhappy divisions," and to beseech Him to pour into our estranged hearts the loving spirit of His long-suffering and uniting grace?

Here surely is the hindrance which, beyond all others, prevents our working a mighty deliverance on the earth. Surely here is that which straitens our graces, weakens our power in this nation, follows us with its debilitating influence into our separate parishes, destroys the authority of our ministrations, enfeebles and contracts our own hearts, and prevents their being chosen vessels full of grace for ourselves, and rich in benedictions for our flocks.

What, then, at this our ordination season, can it be more important for us to weigh well than the causes of this weakening want of unity amongst us? What can be more profitable than to consider how far it may be traced up to ourselves and our own sins? what can be more seasonable for you than that now, as you enter on your course, you should see the need of beginning and continuing it in a spirit of loving obedience and dutiful submission? For let us remember that sin on either side may make impossible those relations of paternal rule which should exist between a bishop and his clergy. If he is haughty and arrogant, as a lord over God's heritage; if he is indolent and self-indulgent, forgetting the apostle's law of "he that ruleth, with diligence," if he is cold and unsympathizing, the sin lieth at his door. But if, on the other hand, the clergy who should be working under and with him are insubordinate and wilful, claiming fiercely their own independence, acting on their own schemes without him or against him; suspicious of his motives, jealous of his authority, careless of his co-operation, and rather desiring to limit what they deem his interference to the mere performance of the functional acts of confirming the young, ordaining clergy, and judging open evil doers, than to associate him with them in all their work, then they make impossible the full exercise amongst them of the bishop's office, and by their own waywardness break up the harmonious law of Christ's ordinance into the scattered and disordered efforts of human invention.

For what, then, can it be our duty to pray more earnestly than for the spirit of meekness, and gentleness, and docility, and unity, knowing that it is with this

that the strength of God is ever present, and that whilst He resisteth the proud He giveth grace to the humble? Surely in keeping this question till the last, the Church has meant to teach us that without this grace of submissiveness for Christ's sake to His appointments, all our other gifts, be they never so many, will prove vain and useless; that knowledge will puff us up, and power make us arrogant, and zeal lead us astray, unless there be the meekness of Christian charity to keep our hearts; that amidst all the watching of Christ's faithful servant, this must be the nearest to his heart, as it is to be learned the closest to his Master's Cross, that self-sacrifice, that hardest sacrifice of all, is the universal law of His service; that His wisdom is with the lowly, and that all other labours for Him will be worse than vain, unless we are enabled in our place of service in His Church to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

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